Strategy White Paper

How to Regain our Strategic Footing

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Strategy White Paper

How to Regain our Strategic Footing

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June 2009

Preface

From January to June 2007, I served as the commander of the 447th Operations Support Squadron at Sather Air Base, Baghdad, Iraq. During that time, I had the occasion to frequently interact with Mr. Hamoudi, the chief of Iraq's fledgling air traffic control organization. Mr. Hamoudi and I were deeply involved in coordinating for the impending troop surge designed to bolster security and stability in Baghdad and the surrounding countryside. Mr. Hamoudi—an educated, well-spoken, elderly Shiite gentleman—and I faced the challenge of balancing the resumption of Iraqi commercial aviation activities at Baghdad International Airport with the ongoing intense pace of U.S. military flight operations required by the surge. Though most of our interactions dealt with security protocols, air traffic procedures, electrical power supply, and infrastructure improvements, one conversation in particular sticks in my mind. We had reverted to discussing politics and ideology when Mr. Hamoudi abruptly turned to me and said: "You know Mr. Lambert, you Americans got it all wrong!" "What do you mean by that," I asked him. Without being prompted, he immediately referred back to the 1991 Gulf War. "In 1991, you had two choices," he explained. "You could have marched all the way to Baghdad and deposed Saddam Hussein. You did not do that. You could also have done nothing, and forced the Arab states to take care of the problem. You did not do that either." He paused for a moment, then continued: "Instead, you did the worst thing possible. You pursued Saddam's army into Iraq, stopped, and negotiated a cease fire agreement with the Republican Guard in the middle of the desert. Then, for the next 12 years, you provided free protection to Saddam Hussein while permitting him to butcher 300,000 of my Shiite brothers!" His expression turned deadpan as he fished his argument. "In 1991, there probably would have been room for national reconciliation in my country, but by 2003, my Shiite brothers wanted revenge."

This paper proceeds from the premise that the 2003 invasion of Iraq can only be seen as part of a broader history of American engagement throughout the Middle East and the so-called Muslim world. Among other events, that history harkens back to the role that the United States played in helping to create the modern Saudi state, the tortured tale of U.S. engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the clandestine U.S. support of the Islamic revolutionary

Mujahideen in Afghanistan in their fight against the Soviets, and the more recent U.S. involvement in the 1991 and 2003 Gulf wars.   The evolution of American strategy throughout the region cannot be viewed disconnectedly through the lens of individual administrations or policy decisions. As is clear from Mr. Hamoudi's comments, previous decisions have given birth to unintended consequences because policy makers failed to consider the long-term or strategic impact of their response to the crises of the day.

This essay seeks to holistically reassess the 21st century security environment, informed both by an understanding of historical imperatives, as well as by the impact of more modern developments. It then offers suggestions for a 21st century grand strategy based on the concept of national sovereignty. Sovereignty should be viewed as a theme in the same way that containment was a guiding principle during the Cold War. Sovereignty means that the United States recognizes in others the freedom for political and ideological self-determination (regardless of how noxious their ideology may seem) but also expects those governments to be accountable under the norms and laws of the international system.   A sovereignty strategy would unburden the United States from evangelizing the world for democracy, and would instead restore the image of a "Beacon on the Hill" or of the Statue of Liberty, beckoning from New York harbor to all of those who voluntarily come to her shores. A sovereignty strategy would resurrect the concept of American exceptionalism—which is informed by the understanding that what works for America may not work for the rest of the world.

The most pressing task is to craft a grand strategy that resonates with the American public. A broad domestic consensus is vital *if* the United States is to regain its strategic footing. As Abraham Lincoln stated in the first Lincoln-Douglas debate, public sentiment is everything: "With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed."   A national security strategy based on sovereignty can naturally draw from the principles of the American founding, in particular the ideas resident in the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

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Introduction

In 333 B.C., a bold and visionary young Alexander the Great embarked on one of the most impressive military campaigns in the history of the world. At the gates of Anatolia and greater Asia, he faced a unique challenge—the riddle of the Gordian Knot. According to Greek legend, the peasant Gordius was selected by Zeus to be the King of Phrygia. In gratitude, Gordius dedicated his ox-cart to Zeus—together with its yoke, which he had knotted to the pole of the cart in a peculiar manner.[1] Subsequently, an oracle announced that whoever solved the mystery of the knot and untied it would become the Lord and conqueror of Asia. In one fashion, the knot represented the myriad of complexities woven into the political and cultural fabric of Anatolia and the Far East. Interestingly enough, the true secret of the Gordian knot seems to have been of a religious nature; Robert Graves asserts that the knot was probably "the ineffable name of Dionysus" cipher-tied into a rawhide thong. In the eyes of the famed British geographer Halford Mackinder, Gordium was the key to Asia Minor, because its fortifications controlled access to the prize trade route from Troy to Antioch. Perhaps the crowds gathered to watch in anticipation when Alexander encamped with his entourage in Gordium, and if there had been live cable television, the cameras would have been waiting to record a momentous event in history. What would the brash and youthful emperor do? Indeed, Alexander initially tried to solve the conundrum of the knot by examination and analysis—but in the end, his appeal to soft power gave way to the sharp edge of the sword. According to Graves, "Alexander's brutal cutting of the knot" served to end "an ancient dispensation by placing the power of the sword above that of religious mystery."[2]

Over 2300 years later, the United States has arrived at its own Gordian knot in much of the same region of the world. The modern version of the knot is also fraught with religious entanglement—a complex web of Islamic ideology, ancient tribalism, historical grand narratives, stubborn despots, and sectarian conflict. In many ways, the United States appears hesitant to engage the enemy's ideology for fear of creating the perception that it is "at war with Islam." Conversely, to one extent or another, the conglomeration of actors on the other

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[1] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (London: The Folio Society, 1996), 263.
[2] Graves, 265.

side seems perennially engaged in a war of ideas against the impact of Western civilization. Simultaneously, the unprecedented singularity of the events of 9/11 appears to be fading along with the notion of a so-called "War on Terror" and its preoccupation with the Al Qaida movement(s). In their place, a different and as-of-yet ill defined reality is setting in. This reality is substantially connected to the broader Islamic milieu, but defies neat definitions and clean categorizations. Uncertainties abound regarding the future of nuclear-armed Pakistan and its ties to the Taliban and Afghanistan; Iran continues to aspire for Shiite and regional dominance and unabashedly forges ahead toward a nuclear weapons capability; Egypt quietly simmers, the ubiquitous Muslim Brotherhood ever asserting its influence; Saudi Arabia marches on as the guardian of the two holy places, keenly aware of its geostrategic importance and its hold on the Sunni world; and then there is the perennial and unresolved Palestinian question, at best an automatic red herring argument that is abused by ruling elites throughout the region, at worst a festering problem that threatens to erupt into full-scale conflict as actors seek to take advantage of its inequities.

In the center of this unsettled domain, the United States finds itself strategically wedded to—perhaps trapped by—Iraq and Afghanistan, apprehensive about its vision for the future of the region, mired in self doubt, and unable to produce coherence beyond day-to-day "stay the course" strategies. Meanwhile, several state and non-state actors appear to be vying for control of Islam's "grand narrative." As Vali Nasr describes it, the Shiite arc of influence, anchored in Iran and extending through southern Iraq to Lebanon and Syria, is increasingly contending with the source of Sunni prestige, which originates in Saudi Arabia and extends throughout the Gulf region and beyond to its principal client state, Pakistan. The sharp edges of sectarian competition are coming back to the forefront as the United States introspectively questions its intentions and role throughout this strategic region. Increasingly, policy makers seem to acknowledge that a regional strategy is required to replace the fading concept of a global war on Terror, but that strategy has yet to clearly emerge. What is to be done? *How should the United States regain its strategic footing—and refocus its efforts?* This paper suggests that the answer to those questions can only be found after (1) re-conceptualizing the new security environment, and (2) fundamentally reassessing U.S. national security strategy.

The New Security Environment.   First, the United States should seek to rebuild a *domestic consensus about the nature of the global security environment*. This will unavoidably involve an Islamic component and should be accomplished by re-examining the corpus of public knowledge about Islam writ large, and be shaped by an honest and Socratic approach to conceptions about the current global threat environment. For the broader American public, this requires understanding that Islam is not simply a "religion" in the conception of Western liberal democracies, but rather an all-encompassing "way of life" that incorporates legal, political, cultural, and religious parameters and guidelines. For national security professionals in government and academia, it requires a fresh approach toward understanding (1) Islam's historical imperative, (2) Islam's modern resurgence, and (3) resurgent Islam's components, ideology and grand strategies.

Western scholarship and writing about Islam burgeoned in the aftermath of 9/11 and this paper does not aim to supplant those efforts. Instead, it seeks to highlight strategically and historically significant trends that form the backdrop of today's Islamic milieu. First, a renewed appreciation of the first strategic trend, *Islam's historical imperative,* is best achieved by examining the life of the prophet, the nature of the Qur'an, the basic assumptions of Islamic metaphysics, the initial politico-military expansion of Islam, and the conflicted nature of Islamic jurisprudence. Next, this essay evaluates *Islam's modern resurgence* in light of four seminal events: the collapse of Arab nationalism in the 1960s, the emergence of Saudi Arabia as the Sunni petro state, the 1979 Iranian revolution, and the series of Afghan wars beginning with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Finally, this paper aims to examine the third strategic factor, *resurgent Islam's components and their ideologies and grand strategies*. Resurgent Islam's main players seem to be Al Qaida and its associated movements (principally non-state actors), and the two Islamic power states of Iran and Saudi Arabia. While each of these major actors takes advantage of aggregating aspects of ideological Islam, they also have developed—and continue to refine—their own unique strategies as they engage in a power struggle for Islam's meta-narrative. Taken collectively, Islam's historical imperative, the seminal events in Islam's modern re-awakening, and resurgent Islam's components and ideologies help to

contextualize and inform an understanding of the present and foreseeable security environment.

However, while Islam is undoubtedly a dominant theme, a new conceptualization of the security environment also requires that the American public regain awareness of the creeping return of authoritarian great powers. The competition amongst Islamic power states is just a subset of the broader international scene, where Russia, China, and North Korea, among others, are less inclined to accept a comfortable globalism, but would rather further their regional and international aspirations.

Reconstituting a National Security Strategy. Based on a new domestic understanding and consensus on the nature of the security environment, the United States should attempt to regain the strategic initiative by reconstituting its national security strategy. In the two decades since the end of the Cold War, U.S. national security strategy seems to have loosely drifted from "end of history" to "global policeman" to "war on terror" mindsets. None of these paradigms satisfyingly reflect the ideas of American exceptionalism. A refreshed national security strategy must find resonance with the core ideas of the American founding; must guarantee American national security; should be simple to communicate at home and abroad; and finally should help to shore up the international structure of the Westphalian system (upon which, it can be argued, the prosperity of the United States rests, directly and indirectly). This paper suggests a strategy based on three basic pillars: sovereignty, deterrence, and diplomacy. First, the United States should seek to internationally re-invigorate the concept of *sovereignty*. Sovereignty can be conceived as a grand strategy, much like the concept of containment served as a guiding theme during the Cold War. In a nutshell, sovereignty simply means that all states (1) have the right to self-governance (2) incur an obligation to abide by established international law; and (3) should be held accountable for the actions of their citizens or other entities that exist within their sovereign national boundaries. Sovereignty is both the freedom for political and ideological self-determination, as well as accountability under the norms and laws of the international system of states. Second, the United States should link this concept of sovereignty with a *renaissance in deterrence strategy*. Deterrence should be rejuvenated beyond the bi-polar Cold War construct, and should be conceived as a spectrum of options

from deterrence by punishment to deterrence by denial. This new deterrence concept requires (1) overcoming the nuclear malaise that has emerged after two decades plus of post-Cold War neglect in all things nuclear, (2) a robust understanding of what some observers now call the "second nuclear age," and (3) a rejuvenation of U.S. deterrence strategy, to include "shaped" or "tailored" strategies (in response to specific actors or threats within the international system), offense-defense synchronization, prompt global strike capabilities (both conventional and nuclear), and a comprehensive overhaul of the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program. Third, and in concert with these concepts of sovereignty and deterrence—and informed and undergirded by a new domestic national security consensus—the United States needs to *reconstitute public diplomacy*. The U.S. can accomplish this (1) by revamping the content of our messaging, (2) by disaggregating the Islamic phenomenon and shaping public diplomacy as a dialogue with individual nation states (e.g. the "Egyptians" or "Iranians"), (3) by avoiding the fallacy of the so-called "moderates," and (4) by forcing the issue of Islamist governance.

On a final note, this paper does not aim to explore the specific dynamics of other undeniably important and strategic actors, particularly China and Russia, or other notoriously mettlesome states such as North Korea. Rather, it aims to widen the national aperture beyond an Al Qaida or "War on Terror" frame of reference, and to present the major Islamic power players as part of a broader national security environment characterized more by competition between major power brokers—and less by the cooperation imagined and hoped for in the immediate aftermath of the great ideological struggle of the previous century, namely the Cold War.

I. The New Security Environment: Toward a Domestic Consensus

As the United States grappled with the after-effects of 9/11, a set of assumptions began to emerge in academic and policy discourse. Over time, these assumptions have virtually achieved the status of accepted truths and are rarely questioned in a substantive manner. Though not delineated in a single policy document, they constitute the backdrop of the national discourse regarding the so-called Islamic world. These assumptions are that *the United States is fighting a war against terror, that Islam has been hijacked by radicals, and that Islam is a religion of peace*. Furthermore, it is as if policy and academic elites have collectively decided that *Islam* is, in effect, "off the table" for public scrutiny and examination. This means that the espoused ideology of a constellation of actors with hostile intentions against the United States is not available for public comment and debate.

This reaction, while strategically dangerous, is certainly understandable. After all, it offends the first amendment sensibilities of most Americans to engage in an aggressive debate about "religion." As noted by others, "The danger here is not only that you might be seen as attacking one religion, but also as proposing to put the U.S. government in the business of deciding which religious beliefs are acceptable and which ones constitute a risk to America's political and social order." The same observer continues that "someone raised in the Enlightenment approach of tolerance and hands-off skepticism about religious disputes recoils at the thought of getting the government involved in judgments about the accuracy or social merits of metaphysical beliefs, doctrines of revelation and salvation, and so on."[3]

Indeed, the original injunction to "render unto Caesar that which is due to Caesar and unto God that which is due to God" is part of the cultural ethos of the West and formed the basis for the separation of the kingdom of earth from the kingdom of heaven. In more recent times, the concept of the divided kingdom emerged from the tradition of Western secularism, the origins of which are in Enlightenment Europe. The Enlightenment gave birth to several fundamental developments: 1) a philosophical shift toward rationality and empirical inquiry and away from faith and religious experience; (2) a difficult and often violent history of

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[3] Notes and comments provided by Dr. David Yost, Professor of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, in conversations with the author in January/February 2005.

decoupling the institutions of church and state; and (3) a set of political values that emphasized the rights of individuals above those of the state and the church.[4] As a result of this intellectual tradition, Western scholars and policy makers have a pronounced tendency to discount visceral religious passion as simple tribalism or primitiveness. Yet this disinclination toward attaching relevance to the religious experiences of "others" can yield gaps in understanding the "others." In the words of one scholar, "the Western practice of placing Islamic fundamentalism under the rubric of 'fanaticism' is singularly dysfunctional for a balanced and dispassionate analysis of the subject."[5]

In reflecting on the current state of affairs throughout the so-called Muslim world, one might argue that the typically Western secularist's search for social or structural variables (e.g. lack of education, poverty, forms of government) has yielded less than fruitful explanations of why Islam seems to be resurgent. As Hrair Dekmejian observed in 1995, "the conceptual myopia induced by Western and Marxist materialism had effectively blindfolded both scholars and statesmen, who tended to dismiss or underestimate the regenerative capacity of Islam."[6] The assumptions listed above have perpetuated a "hands off" ethos when approaching the study of Islam. This has yielded a strategic blindness. The late Adda Bozeman adroitly commented that penetrating studies of non-Western cultures should have "persuaded us long ago that *our* conceptions of war and peace, *our* ideas of the state and sovereignty, *our* notion of the function of diplomacy, and *our* values of good faith and contractual ethics in the conduct of international relations is not shared by others."[7]

Nevertheless, the decided secular perspective of the Enlightenment, coupled with the concept of a divided kingdom, constitutes the default lens through which most Americans analyze other cultures. The inherent and dangerous assumption is that other cultures *ipso facto* use the same frames of reference. The problem with this perspective is that Islam is not *just* a religion and it does not use the same frames of reference. It is an all-encompassing

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[4] Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 9.
[5] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 6.
[6] Dekmejian, 6-7.
[7] Adda Bozeman "Covert Action and Foreign Policy" in *Intelligence Requirements for the 1980's,* ed. Roy Godson*,* (Washington D.C.: National Strategy Information Center), 22.

organizing system for the world, a religio-political ideology comprised of legal codes, social guidelines, and cultural norms. The following section will attempt to explore and unpack (1) Islam's historical imperative, (2) Islam's modern resurgence, and (3) resurgent Islam's components, ideology and grand strategies in order to attempt to better understand how differently the "other" really thinks.

It is impossible to understand the texture of the new security environment without a grasp of Islam's historical imperatives. That is not to say that Islam's historical imperatives resonate equally with all Muslims throughout the world. However, it is to say that Islam's history is a tapestry against which the entire spectrum of Islam gains modern relevancy— whether in the form of a vague connection to a great culture of antiquity, or as a religio-political injunction to forcefully carry on the work of the prophet in today's modern age.

Islam's Historical Imperative[8]

Al-islam din wa dawla—Islam is both religion and state.[9] Islam was conceived by the Prophet Mohammad as a unitary kingdom, the fusion of divine sovereignty with man's existence on earth. From the very beginning, the imprimatur of the divine combined with the success of the prophet to bequeath to Islam an historical imperative. This thrust across space and time can be understood by examining several interrelated factors: (1) the impact of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, (2) the nature of the Quran, (3) the concept of Islamic metaphysics, (4) the historical momentum and expectations established by Islam's initial expansion, and (5) the role of Islamic jurisprudence.

The Prophet. The prophet Mohammad occupies the most exalted position in Islam, apart from Allah and the sacred text of the Qur'an. He was, at once, the prophet, prince, warrior, judge, and chief executive officer of the community and phenomenon that he created. In the Qur'an, Muslims find praise regarding the life of the prophet: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern [of conduct] for any one whose hope is in Allah and the

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[8] This section entitled "Islam's Historical Imperative" and encompassing the Prophet Muhammad, the Quran, Islamic metaphysics, and Islam's initial expansion, represents an updated and substantially revised version of a draft manuscript previously written by the author and published as part of Y: *The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic Intelligence Research, Joint Military Intelligence College, 2005).

[9] Mandaville, 12.

Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah (Surah Al Ahzab, 33:21)." Indeed, the prophet is a source of guidance and inspiration for Muslims, and his life and personal habits—down to the most discriminating details for some believers—are held up as a model for all to follow. The Cordovan theologian Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Hazm considered it an ethical requirement to intimately follow the example of the prophet: "If someone aspires to felicity in the next world and wisdom in this, to righteousness in his conduct, he should follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad and copy in practice, as much as possible, the Prophet's character and conduct."[10] Muslims show a deep sense of respect and love for the prophet. Indeed, "Love of the prophet constitutes a fundamental element in Islamic spirituality," according to Frithjof Schuon writing in his classic work *Understanding Islam*.[11] "The Prophet *is* Islam [emphasis added]" Schuon explains, and "Love of the Prophet constitutes a fundamental element in Islamic spirituality."[12] A well-known *hadith* attests to the centrality of the prophet's role: "No man will meet God who has not first met the Prophet."[13] Though Muslims stop short of worshipping Mohammad, there is, in a sense, a compelling spiritual quality attached to this phenomenon. It is therefore not without due justification that D. G. Hogarth remarks: "Serious or trivial, his daily behavior has instituted a Canon which millions observe to this day with conscious mimicry. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has been imitated so minutely."[14]

Mohammad began his prophetic endeavor in Mecca, where he was troubled by the influence of paganism and of non-Arabic tribal religions. The beginning of his career was spent trying to peacefully reform and change his immediate environment. Driven by somber and apocalyptic images, he resigned himself to preaching in patience, and persevering with a handful of faithful companions, all the while enduring the scorn and abuse of the dominant

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[10] Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Hazm quoted in Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. Andreas and Ruth Hamori, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 21.

[11] Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, trans. D.M. Matheson (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965), 95.

[12] Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, revised and augmented translation (Bloomington: World Wisdom, Inc., 1998), 108-121.

[13] Schuon, 121

[14] D.G. Hogarth quoted in Norman Anderson, *Islam in the Modern World* (Leicester: Apollos Press, 1990), 10.

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Meccan traders and business class. The turning point came in A.D. 622 with what Muslims now call the *hijra*, when Mohammad emigrated with his small band of followers to Medina.

In Medina he consolidated his followers and became a statesman, taking on the roles of politician and military leader. His religious revelations (later incorporated into the Qur'an) became increasingly pragmatic and served the needs and contingencies of the situation he was dealing with. They addressed day-to-day issues of governance, details about familial and social organization, and rules of combat and warfare. It was in Medina that Islam evolved into a political institution as well as a fighting organization.[15] Previously in Mecca, Mohammad was rejected as a prophet, but in Medina he rapidly became the compelling and unifying force behind a new and militant theocracy. Mohammad labored to unify a set of fractious and quarrelsome tribes, using his theocratic vision as a mechanism to create a new identity—the Islamic *ummah*. Religion served to define the new identity in a way that no economic or political structure had been able to satisfy previously.

In a Machiavellian sense, it was convenient to be surrounded by competitors and threats. This allowed Mohammad to empower his followers with a new sense of security previously unknown by the quarreling tribes. In a series of raids known as *razzia*s, he slowly consolidated his base in Medina, using these expeditions to begin to focus the attention of his followers to outside threats—and away from internal conflict. Islam directly facilitated two critical functions for Mohammad: (1) it served to internally regulate the daily affairs of its adherents, creating an ordered society of believers; and (2) it focused the energies of the community of believers externally on unbelievers and enemies of Allah. Some scholars argue that the restless, skirmishing culture of the Bedouin tribes of the Hijaz required that they either be united to fight a common foe, or else were condemned to fight amongst themselves. As such, Mohammad succeeded in pointing their aggressive impulse outward.

The Battle of Badr, often referenced by Muslims to this day, was the first stunning success for Mohammad. In A.D. 624, he set out with a force of only 300 men, against a large Meccan caravan of 1,000 camels and almost 1,000 men. In the initial exchanges of the battle, Mohammad exhorted his men by offering heavenly paradise to those who were slain.

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[15] Goldziher, 9.

Mohammad managed to rout the Meccans. A year after the Battle of Badr, 700 faithful fought at Uhud against 3,000 Meccans; two years later at the Battle of Trench, 3,000 Muslims were pitted against 10,000 Meccans.[16] However, Mohammad did not always resort to force; rather, he demonstrated keen instinct and was a shrewd pragmatist. He surged, consolidated, and withdrew as necessary. As others have observed, "when he was in a position of strength, he attacked a new tribe, subdued it, and obliged it to pay tribute; when he considered himself as strong as his enemy, he reached an agreement with him, when he felt he was in the weaker position, he simply avoided all conflict. Thus, thanks to his intelligent strategy he managed to increase his base of followers and his economic support."[17]

Yet while these battles helped to transform and expand Islam under the leadership of the prophet, religious and economic competition from Jewish tribes and other indigenous groups throughout the Arabian Peninsula continued to impede Mohammad's progress. The Battle of Badr, and later the Battle of Uhud, according to scholars, were both followed by expulsions of two Jewish clans, the Qaynuqa and the al-Nadir.[18] In time, Mohammad was forced to deal with the Qurayza,[19] a Jewish tribe that directly competed with the Muslims for primacy in Medina. After several minor military skirmishes, the Qurayza surrendered unconditionally to Mohammad and his followers. What Mohammad chose to do next is instructive. First he divided the loot among his followers, and sold the women and children into slavery. This would not have been unusual. The women and children were conquered in battle and therefore became property (what the right hand owns) of the prophet. According to custom, it was therefore his right to sell his property. However, what happened next was unusual, even for the times. There are two separate accounts of what happened to the male members of the Qurayza tribe. Ibn Ishaq records in *al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*: "Then the Apostle went to the market of Medina…and had trenches dug. After that, he sent for them and had

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[16] Subhash C. Inamdar, *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam: The Creation of Group Identity* (Madison: Psychosocial Press, 2001), 218. Basma Abdul-Hamid notes that the battle of Uhud played a pivotal role in shaping Muslims' military mindset (strategic, operational, and tactical). Losing this battle due to loss of military discipline and materialistic greed had a profound influence on their psyche and that of generations to come.

[17] Khalil Samir, 111 *Questions on Islam: On Islam and the West*, ed. and trans. Wafik Nasry (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 38.

[18] Inamdar, 165.

[19] Abdul-Hamid notes that most western texts insist on spelling it as such, Qurayza; however, the correct pronunciation and thus spelling should be Quraytha.

them decapitated into those trenches, as they were brought out in groups…. In all, they were about six hundred or seven hundred, although some say there were as many as eight or nine hundred."[20] Ibn Sa'd, in *Kitab Al-Tabaqat Al-Kabir,* chronicles: "Then he [the Apostle of Allah] commanded them to be brought into al-Madinah, where ditches were dug in the market. The Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him, sat with his Companions and they were brought in small groups. Their heads were struck off. They were between six hundred and seven hundred in number."[21] Recall that the actions of the prophet Mohammad are deemed to be exemplary in all respects.

Having firmly consolidated his hold on Medina, the prophet turned toward Mecca, which he besieged with a large army of Muslim faithful in early 630 A.D. On January 11th, Mohammad divided his forces into four columns and entered the city from four directions, surrounded by 400 heavily armed horsemen and 10,000 foot soldiers.[22] His image was cast—as a military conqueror, driven by the political vision of a united Arabia, and with the imprimatur of Allah as the prophet of the purest religion. The same year, Mohammad led 30,000 men, of which 10,000 were mounted cavalry, on a Syrian campaign to challenge the Byzantine Empire to the north. "According to Ibn Hisham's most authoritative biography, titled *Sira*, Muhammad was responsible for nineteen raids and pillagings during the decade spent in Medina."[23] Mohammad had reached his zenith as a military leader—he dressed for battle wrapping a turban around his helmet, donned a breastplate under which he wore a coat of mail, belted himself with a leather sword-belt, and slung his shield across his back.[24] In fact, the first biographies of Mohammad seemed to have been entitled *kitah al-ma*ghazi or the "Book of Raids."[25]

But Mohammad was more than a leader in battle; he was a master strategist who wedded political pragmatism with *realpolitik* and "blood and iron" in similar fashion as Bismarck did for the German states. He understood that force alone was not sufficient to

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[20] Ibn Ishaq quoted in *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*, ed. Andrew Bostom (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2008), 277.

[21] Ibn Sa'd quoted in *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*, p. 286.

[22] Inamdar, 177.

[23] Samir, 37-38.

[24] Inamdar, 218-19.

[25] Samir, 65-66.

sustain and expand the newly forming community. In this sense, his blend of diplomacy and

war—of soft and hard power—speaks to his skill and acumen. As Hugh Kennedy has written:

> Muhammad's military campaigns were, in one sense, the beginning of the Muslim
> conquests. His example showed that armed force was going to be an acceptable and
> important element first in the defense of the new religion and then in its expansion.
> The Prophet's example meant that there was no parallel tendency to pacifism so
> marked in early Christianity. The history of his campaigns was well remembered by the
> early Muslims…. At the same time, diplomacy was certainly more important than
> military conquest in the spread of Muhammad's influence in the Arabian Peninsula. It
> was the network of contacts…rather than the sword which led people from as far away
> as Yemen and Oman to swear allegiance to him.[26]

From a religious perspective, Mohammad led the faithful in bringing the so-called "rightly-

guided" divine message to an ever-increasing geographical area. From a secular perspective,

Mohammad is to be admired for his dogged tenacity, visionary leadership, and compelling

personality and charisma. He has been described as one of the most successful politicians of all

time. Thus, as F.E. Peters has written, "Muhammad was not simply God's envoy; he was also,

for much of his later life, judge, spiritual guide, and military and political leader, first of a

community, then of a city-state, and finally of a burgeoning empire."[27]

Today Mohammad is referred to as the *uswa hasana*—the most excellent role model,[28]

and the *insan al-kamil*—the perfect person.[29] Albert Hourani writes of Mohammad's final visit

to Mecca before he died in 632 A.D., when the prophet gave a speech which succinctly

summarized his goals of internal consolidation and external expansion: "'Know that every

Muslim is a Muslim's brother, and that the Muslims are brethren'; fighting between them

should be avoided, and the blood shed in pagan times should not be avenged; Muslims should

fight all men until they say, 'There is no god but God.'" There have been few historical vectors

as significant as the fact that Islam was ascendant at the time of the prophet's death. The

unique circumstances of his life have provided Islam with a perduring message. As Anna

Simons notes, "As a revealed religion, it lends exemplary status to the age in which it was

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[26] Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2007), 48.
[27] F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 99.
[28] Goldziher, 92.
[29] Mandaville, 25

revealed, while the Prophet who brought it to the faithful has to be considered not only a 'paradigm for his companions' *then*, but the exemplar still."[30]

The Qur'an. The Qur'an is accepted as the *ipsissima verba*[31] of God—it represents the final revelation of God. It is final in the sense that it came after the Torah was revealed to the Jews and the Gospels of the New Testament were given to the Christians. Muslims believe that *only* the Qur'an is God's final revelation about his perfect religion—Islam. The revelation is believed to have come from the archangel Gabriel to the prophet over a period of 23 years. Mohammad did not write down his revelations, but passed them on in the oral tradition. This adds to the mystique of the Qur'an, for Muslims believe in what one scholar has called the *i'jaz* or *mu'jizah* of the Qur'an—its matchlessness and incomparability.[32] Muslims hold that "the Qur'an cannot be rivaled in form or in worth. This superlative eloquence is regarded as the crowning evidence of its divine origin, the more so because it is found on the lips of a Prophet who disowned all poetic competence and was understood to be *ummi*, or 'illiterate.'"[33]

To a Muslim, the Qur'an has its own special mystique, derived from the language of the revelation, Arabic, as well as its style of prose. To understand its full scope, one must look beyond its important doctrinal content and get a sense of what Muslims see as its divine magic and miraculous power. That is, a sense of "metaphysical and eschatological wisdom, of mystical psychology and theurgic power [that] lie hidden under a veil of breathless utterances often clashing in shock, of crystalline and fiery images, but also of passages majestic rhythm, woven of every fiber of the human condition."[34] The language of the Qur'an is considered the sacred language of the revelation and of the religion. As such, Arabic is accorded special status because Allah chose it above all others to make his revelation known. Therefore, translations of the Qur'an from its original Arabic are generally not considered canonically legitimate by doctrinaire Muslims, and certainly are looked upon as rhythmically and ritually inferior by

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[30] Anna Simons, "Culture and the Practice of Deception," paper written for the 2003 Colloquium on Foreign Denial and Deception (Washington, DC), unpublished manuscript, August 2003, 53.

[31] Anderson, *Islam in the Modern World*, 39.

[32] Kenneth Cragg and R. Marston Speight, *The House of Islam*, 3d ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1988), 32.

[33] Cragg and Speight, 32.

[34] Schuon, 48.

Muslims at large.[35] The prevailing opinion among scholars is that most translations fail to preserve the unity and linguistic cohesiveness of the original Arabic.

But beyond this language barrier, the literary structure of the Qur'an also seems to pose unique challenges. As Ignaz Goldziher comments, "there is one thing even prejudice cannot deny. The people entrusted...with the redaction of the unordered parts of the book occasionally went about their work in a very clumsy fashion. With the exception of the earliest Meccan *surahs*, which the Prophet had used before his emigration to Medina as liturgical texts, and which consist of self-contained pieces so brief as to make them less vulnerable to editorial confusion, the parts of the holy book, and particularly certain Medinese *surahs*, often display a disorder and lack of coherence that caused considerable difficulty and toil to later commentators who had to regard the established order as basic and sacrosanct."[36] Some of the difficulty in understanding the Qur'an may stem from the change in Mohammad's role from Mecca to Medina. As discussed previously, while in Mecca, Mohammad was a preacher, passionately driven to change people's focus from what he viewed as dark and pagan practices toward the one true religion. By the time Mohammad reached Medina, he served primarily as a political and military leader—in effect a prince, now concerned with ordering and directing the affairs of his followers, and protecting them from both internal and external threats.

The tension between the Meccan and Medinan *surahs* has created avenues for multiple opinions on various aspects of the Qur'an; indeed, for centuries, Muslim scholars have debated and argued about how to interpret the Qur'an. Great men such as Al-Ghazali asserted that the proper interpretation of the Qur'an was more literal, and the guiding principle was the life of the prophet. Al-Ghazali believed that the "only infallible teacher...was Muhammad, and the right path was to accept his revelation by faith...and to follow the way it prescribes, but to do so with sincerity and the presence of the heart, and with an abandonment of all except the service of God."[37] Today's scholars would label Al-Ghazali as a "fundamentalist" or a "strict constructionist." On the other hand, the well-known philosopher Averroes set about to refute Al-Ghazali's interpretations, and argued against a literal reading of the Qur'an; when there was

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[35] Schuon, 49.
[36] See lengthy footnote on p. 28-29 in Goldziher.
[37] Al-Ghazali quoted in Hourani, 168-169.

conflict between a literal reading and the exercise of reason, Averroes believed that those *surahs* needed to be interpreted metaphorically.[38] In his book entitled *On the Harmony between Reason and the Revealed Law*, Averroes intoned that man not only has the right, but rather the duty, to interpret the Qur'an, for the purpose of grasping its true meaning.[39] Commentators today would likely call Averroes a "progressive." In the modern context, the conflict between the "strict constructionists" and the "progressives" has usually favored the former, because the latter can all-to-easily be accused of being innovators and of going against the weight of Islamic tradition. This has led some scholars to assert that "the weight of tradition and, above all, the fear of questioning the acquired security of the text have created a taboo: the Qur'an cannot be interpreted, nor can it be critically rethought."[40]

An example of this Qur'anic tension is displayed by the following example. *Surah* 16:125, one of the Meccan *surahs*, states: "Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching: and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: For your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path and who received guidance." Hugh Kennedy writes that "the number and urgency of these exhortations suggests that there was a quietist group among the early Muslims who were, for whatever reason, reluctant to fight aggressive wars for their new religion."[41] On the other hand, Surah 9:5, which Mohammad subsequently revealed in Medina, states the following: "When the sacred months are past, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them, besiege them and lie in wait for them in every place of ambush; but if they repent, pray regularly and give the alms tax, then let them go their way, for God is forgiving, merciful."[42]

Scholars argue that the principle of abrogation sheds light on this apparent inconsistency. Abrogation is related to the Islamic concept of progressive revelation, meaning that Islam is the final revelation of divine truth, as evolved from the earlier manifestations of monotheism. Judaism and Christianity are both seen by Muslims to be flawed descendents of the religion of Abraham. Islam, while of the same origin, is the progressive and divine

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[38] Hourani, 175-175.
[39] Samir, 43.
[40] Samir, 43-44.
[41] Kennedy, 49.
[42] Kennedy, 49-50.

conclusion to that tradition. In Surah *Al Baqarah* (2:106), the Qur'an states the following: "None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things?" Thus, abrogation implies that there is both continuity and change—continuity in the sense that God's revelation is consistent across time, but also change in the sense that God's divine will is revealed differently in different circumstances.

For example, the initial practice of facing toward Jerusalem during ritualistic prayer (Surah 2:143) was abrogated by Surah 2:144, which directed the faithful to now turn toward Mecca: "Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction." While the importance of ritualistic prayer did not diminish, the direction that the faithful were to face was changed. In another example, the faithful were first directed to fast during the ten days of Ashura—based on a Jewish tradition. Later, fasting during Ashura was amended by new guidance: "Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Quran as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting (Surah 2:185)." While there was continuity in the necessity of the fast, the method and timing of fulfilling it were changed. A third and crucial example of abrogation applies to tensions and conflict with pagan unbelievers and Jews. If contact with them could not be avoided, and if the Muslim faithful were increasingly subjected to challenges by other so-called polytheistic religions (as Mohammad realized toward the end of his initial tenure in Mecca), then the way the pagans were supposed to be treated evolved over time. Initially, the faithful were ordered to turn away from the ignorant ones and to ignore or avoid them altogether. However, after the migration to Medina, with Mohammad as the leader of an increasing and influential community of believers in close proximity to the pagans, a new revelation came down from Allah:

> Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith (Surah 2:190-91).

The guidance to simply avoid pagan contact was no longer tenable with an expanding community of believers. It was therefore superseded by the new "order of the sword."

Thus, Hugh Kennedy writes that "the verses advocating unrestricted warfare on the unbelievers were revealed later than the more moderate ones urging preaching and discussion. According to the religious scholars, this meant that the earlier verses were abrogated or replaced by the later ones."[43] This has led some to conclude that Qur'an, in effect, provides an avenue for a "rough and ready rule of thumb" justification for wars of conquest. In this regard, the following passage is instructive in that it incorporates the concepts of continuity, abrogation (from Abraham to Mohammad), and a novel form of aggression that amounts to a threat of war encapsulated within an offer of peace. It is attributed to the Prophet Mohammad, and comes from a letter that he wrote to the Christians living in Najran:

> In the Name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. From Muhammad, the Prophet and Apostle of God to the Bishop and the people of Najran. Peace upon you. I praise the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I call upon you to serve God, and not to serve men. I call upon you to let yourself be ruled by God [Allah], and not by men. When you refuse, then a head tax. When you refuse this too, be apprised of war. A greeting of Peace.[44]

The Qur'an is not the only component of the Islamic canon, and although a more detailed discussion lies beyond the scope of this paper, it would be incomplete without mentionning the *hadiths* (or traditions) of Islam. The *hadiths*, of which there are literally thousands, base their legitimacy on their connection to the life of the prophet. Norman Anderson explains that the key element in the traditions is "the *sunna* or practices of the Prophet which they alleged to establish... [T]he authority of the vast majority [of *hadiths*] rests on the belief that all the Prophet of Islam did, said, or permitted was divinely inspired in content..."[45] The Qur'an and the *hadiths* (which incorporate the *sunna*) form the foundation of the Islamic canon. That canon has been expanded to formulate the doctrines of the major schools of Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic law, or *shariah*. Together, these elements form a

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[43] Kennedy, 50.
[44] The Prophet Muhammad quoted in Johannes Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co, 1986), 194.
[45] Anderson, 77.

comprehensive code of life covering every aspect and phase of human existence. Ultimately, the entire Islamic code of conduct traces its origins back to the revelation provided by the prophet in the Qur'an, as well as to the day-to-day life and practices of the prophet, as revealed in the *hadiths*.

Islamic Metaphysics. What is the study of metaphysics and why is it important to gain a basic understanding of it? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, metaphysics refers to the study of philosophy as concerned with more abstract concepts such as the nature of existence or of truth and knowledge. Metaphysics involves structured thinking about the world of the divine, a world that is traditionally seen to be outside the scope of empirical or scientific study. More specifically, metaphysics provides a methodical way to study how people think about religion. Even more basically, it can be reduced to the study of religious doctrine.

As mentioned previously, in Europe and the West, the Enlightenment began the process of displacing metaphysics with the "hard" sciences in order to explain everything from natural phenomena to human behavior. In today's secular West, metaphysics has largely been discarded as a frame of reference in the analytical toolset of academics and policy makers. However, ideas about religion have modern cultural and political implications. The study of metaphysics helps to explore those implications and to show why different systems of thought yield imperatives that have strategic consequences. What follows is an admittedly brief—yet vital—explanation of Islamic metaphysics. Even a cursory appreciation for Islamic metaphysics can substantially contribute to a broader understanding of Islam's historical and persistent imperatives.

In order to unpack the metaphysics of Islam, we must understand Islamic doctrine. Generally speaking, the study of religious doctrine requires an exploration of the nature of man, the nature of god, as well as the nature, practice and experience of religious faith. The core doctrines of Islam (and any religion, for that matter) can be seen to rest on four central pillars: *anthropology, theology, soteriology*, and *eschatology*. A*nthropology* is the study of the nature of man, *theology* is the study of god, *soteriology* is the study how man enters the life hereafter (if one believes that it exists), and *eschatology* is the study of the nature and character of the life hereafter (also known alternatively as paradise or heaven).

Anthropology. Islamic doctrine about man's nature revolves around the concept of *fitra*. According to *fitra*, man is created by God with a balanced soul or a neutral state of mind. It is therefore the surrounding environment, primarily the influences of the family and of society, which tend to either promote good or encourage evil in man. Man is envisaged "not as a fallen being needing a miracle to save him, but as man, a theomorphic being endowed with an intelligence capable of conceiving of the Absolute and with a will capable of choosing what leads to the Absolute."[46] The image of an empty vessel comes to mind. The vessel, according to the Qur'an, was divinely created and endowed with the ability to choose what is good. The Qur'an indicates in *Surah* Al Rum: "So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which he has made mankind (30:30)."[47] As explained by one Muslim commentator, man was created by Allah as "innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endowed with true understanding about his own position in the Universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power." Yet, man is also "caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teaching" and this "may make him pugnacious, unclean, false, slavish, hankering after what is wrong or forbidden, and deflected from the love of his fellow-men and the pure worship of the One True God." The Qur'an thus presents man, in the words of the commentator, as "universally sinful in act, but this comes of his weakness, not from a sinful taint. Man is prone to sin, but not of sinful nature. He has lost Paradise, but he is not radically estranged from God."[48]

The well-respected Islamic scholar H.A.R. Gibb has written that in Islam, "There is nothing in humans that is essentially—that is fundamentally and irrevocably—evil. At their core, recall, humans are constituted according to the *fitra*."[49] This perspective offers an affirmative outlook on human nature—given appropriate circumstances (i.e. the correct upbringing, education, social environment), man has a divinely-instilled ability to achieve the will of Allah. Therefore, in Islam, the concept of *fitra* makes it the responsibility of family and

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[46] Schuon, 13.
[47] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, trans. Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, in *The World of Islam: Resources for Understanding* (Colorado Springs: Global Mapping International, 2000), CD-ROM. This is the source of all Quranic citations in this paper. Hereafter referred to as *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*.
[48] Commentary by Yusuf Ali in *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*
[49] H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 45.

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society to provide the proper environment for the fulfillment of this divine inclination. Interestingly, much like Rousseau and his fellow French revolutionaries believed that human nature is essentially pure and virtuous and that society corrupts man's innate goodness, similarly, Islam seems to blame society and its organizing mechanisms for the corruption of the faithful. Politically speaking then, it is consistent that the focus in Islam has historically been to purge society of its wayward influences and apply correctives so as to arrange society as a constructive religious environment for mankind.

Theology. Theology is the study of god. Islam stresses belief in the oneness of God. The emphasis of the entire system of Islamic belief is underscored by the following creedal statement: *La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah*—there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is Allah's prophet. This monotheistic focus is summarized by Al-Ghazali: "We believe that the world has a Maker, Who is One, Powerful, Knowing, Willing, Speaking, Hearing, and Seeing; Who has no one like Him."[50] The often repeated first surah of the Qur'an, the *Al Fatihah*, captures the Muslim believer's approach toward Allah:

> In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
> Praise be to Allah, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;
> Most Gracious, Most Merciful;
> Master of the Day of Judgment.
> Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.
> Show us the straight way,
> The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.[51]

The absolute oneness, indivisibility, and centrality of Allah are fundamental to the Muslim's understanding of the divine. As one Muslim writer has noted, "God is the essence of existence. His Arabic name is Allah. He is The First and The Last. He is unique and nothing resembles him in any respect. He is One and The One. He is self-sustained, does not need anything but everything needs Him."[52]

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[50] Ghazali quoted in F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 77.

[51] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*

[52] Muhammad Abdul Rauf, *Islam: Creed and Worship* (Washington D.C.: The Islamic Center, 1974), 2-3.

This passion, commitment, and deep conviction that Muslims feel toward the supremacy of Allah is difficult to understand in today's Western world. Islam is, as one scholar describes it, a religion of absolute certitude—and this certitude is characterized most of all by the persuasive ardor that stresses the reality of the absolute and the dependence of all things *on* the Absolute.[53] Islamic doctrine is therefore deeply concerned with man's obligation to submit to the will of Allah. Allah's love for mankind seems to be conditionally based on man's works in service to Him—"If ye do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Obey Allah and His Messenger: but if they turn back, Allah loveth not those who reject Faith (Surah 3:30-32).[54] Furthermore, Islam's intense monotheistic passion is revealed by what Muslims consider to be the greatest sin. Ignaz Goldziher, a renowned scholar of Islamic theology and law, explains that the greatest of all sins is *shirk*—the association of other gods with the only god, Allah—and that for *shirk*, there is no forgiveness.[55] In Surah Al Nisa'(4:48), the Qur'an explains that "Allah forgiveth not (the sin of) joining other gods with him; but he forgiveth whom he pleaseth other sins than this: one who joins other gods with Allah, hath strayed far, far away (from the right)."[56] Again, in Surah *Luqman* (31:13), the Qur'an indicates that associating others with the deity of Allah is the highest of errors: "Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: O my son join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong doing."[57]

In summary, Islam may be described as a doctrine of the unity of Allah—the all-encompassing, all-prevailing, all-powerful, absolute pristine monotheism of Allah. Islam operates on a principle of divine unity by requiring a Muslim's complete submission to the certitude of that unity and of that absolute (Allah).[58] Another scholar describes the profound impact of Allah's transcendence in the following way: "Muslim theology 'presumes that Allah creates every isolated thing at every moment. Providence thus is shattered into infinitely many individual acts of creation, with no connection to each other, each of which has the importance

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[53] Schuon, 18.
[54] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*
[55] Goldziher, 42.
[56] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*
[57] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*.
[58] Schuon, 118-19.

of the entire creation. That has been the doctrine of the ruling orthodox philosophy in Islam.

Every individual thing is created from scratch at every moment. Islam cannot be salvaged from

this frightful providence of Allah."[59]

Soteriology. The study of soteriology addresses how man can be absolved or rescued

from the consequences of evil in the world—in a nutshell, how man can gain access to paradise

(in the hereafter). In Islam, man is stained by evil as a consequence of moments of weakness, a

lack of resolve, and the negative influences of culture in the form of the immediate family and

the greater society. The challenge in Islam is to overcome these negative influences and to

conform to man's natural constitution, or *fitra*, which will naturally lead individuals to God.

This process must occur meritoriously. In other words, Islam is an orthopractical (i.e. works-

based) doctrine in that it provides, with Allah's guidance, a set of rules that enable the faithful

to earn their salvation *by their own merit*. Islam is therefore predominantly a system of rules

and law, of practices and observances.

That is not to say that Islam does not require Muslims to display faith. One Muslim

theologian, Muhammad Abul Quasem, writes that "the Qur'an teaches that the means to

salvation in the Hereafter on the human side are belief or faith (*iman*) and action (*amal*):

salvation cannot be achieved without these two means."[60] The faith that Quasem is talking

about consists of two parts: the Islamic *shahada* (belief in the oneness of Allah and in the

prophet Mohammad), and belief in life after death. Nevertheless, the overwhelming focus in

Islam is not on a system of beliefs, but rather on a system of works. Indeed, numerous

hadiths—or traditions—record that it is the deeds of believers that earn merit in the sight of

Allah.   The well-known obligatory religious duties are in many ways the most visible elements

of Islam: (1) the *shahada*, or confession of faith, (2) the *salat*, or ritual prayer, performed five

times daily; (3) the *saum*, or fast performed during the month of Ramadan; (4) the *zakat*, or

tithe and alms giving; and (5) the *haij*, or pilgrimage to Mecca. Sometimes among Sunnis, and

normally among Shiites, *jihad* is added as a religious duty—in the context of both an internal

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[59] David Goldman (writing under the pseudonym Spengler), "Christian, Muslim, and Jew," http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6040, accessed 4 Feb 2009.

[60] Muhammad Abul Quasem, *Salvation of the Soul and Islamic Devotions* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1983), 29.

struggle, as well as an external military struggle in defense of the *ummah*, or community of believers.

These religious obligations operationalize the concept of *tawhid*, the doctrine of the central unity of Allah.   As a set of practical observances, they provide proof of man's submission to Allah. Enshrined in Islamic jurisprudence, they form the foundation of the concept of *shariah*, a system of rules and laws designed to regulate the society of believers. The *shariah* and the religious obligations are the vehicles that allow Muslims to meritoriously prove themselves worthy before Allah. Thus, as one observer notes, "Muslims have the obligation to create a social world in which they can implement *sharia*, the social world in which it is possible to do good works, a social world that is all encompassing, regulating most aspects of their lives."[61] While the *tawhid* sets the stage and teaches Muslims what should be believed, it is the obligations and *shariah* that provide the orthopractical guide regarding how to behave.[62]

Islamic scholars emphasize that belief *alone* is not enough. Man must practically and correctly perform all the duties required by Islam. The modern-day Egyptian Islamic activist scholar Sayyid Qutb summarized this well:

> One of the characteristic marks of this faith is the fact that it is essentially a unity. It is at once worship and work, religious law and exhortation.… [T]he essential spirit of this religion is found in this—that practical work is religious work, for religion is inextricably bound up with life and can never exist in the isolation of idealism in some world of the conscious alone.[63]

Islam's orthopractical obligations compel the faithful along a never-ending quest. Muslims live under persistent uncertainty about the successful completion of this quest; ultimately, their lives in the hereafter hang in the balance. At the final judgment, good works will be weighed against evil deeds. As is written in the Qur'an, "Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will attain salvation: But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell will they abide. The Fire will burn their faces, and they will therein grin, with

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[61] Mark Gould, *Eschatology and Soteriology: Religious Commitment and Its Consequences in Islam and Christianity* (Department of Sociology, Haverford College), draft paper submitted for publication, August 2003, 18.

[62] Norman Anderson, *Islam in the Modern World*, 43.

[63] Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. John B. Hardie (Oneonta, NY: Islamic Publications International, 2000), 27-29.

their lips displaced (Surah Al Mu'minun, 23: 102-104)."[64] A Muslim can never be certain of

salvation because the weighing of deeds does not occur until the end (the final judgment). As

Al-Faruqi wrote, "Islam denies that a human can attain religious felicity on the basis of faith

alone...only the works and deeds constitute justification in God's eyes.... *Religious justification*

is thus the Muslims' great eternal hope, never their complacent certainty, nor for even a fleeting

moment [emphasis in the original]."[65]

The impetus to work harder, given this lack of assurance, should not be discounted in

Islam. The focus is on tipping the balance in one's favor, and the ritualistic obligations provide

mechanisms to do so. They empower Muslims to "strive in the way of god" and to prove that

they are following god's commands. As W. Montgomery Watt eloquently states, "Islam does

not normally think of the rights of man because it is more conscious of the commands of

God."[66] The emphasis on deeds, practical works, and meritorious achievements is

unmistakable. Ultimately, one cannot but be struck by the fact that for Muslims, there may be

expectation, but not a certainty of salvation. "Put more starkly," Anderson writes, "the salient

impression one gets from Islamic theology as a whole is that of the sovereign Lord for whose

mercy one may certainly hope, but of which one can never be assured."[67] For this reason,

Muslims focus on obligatory works to assuage their doubt—to gain merit by obeying the

commands of God, accepting the dogmas of Islam, and diligently performing its prescribed

duties of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimage, (and sometimes jihad).[68]

Eschatology. The final component of theological doctrine is eschatology, the study of

the hereafter. In Surah Al Qari'ah (101: 4-9), the Qur'an addresses the day of divine judgment

in the following way:

> (It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about,
> And the mountains will be like carded wool.
> Then he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy,
> Will be in a Life of good pleasure and satisfaction.
> But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light,

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[64] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*.
[65] Al-Faruqi quoted in Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 128.
[66] W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 121.
[67] Anderson, *God's Law and God's Love*, 100.
[68] Anderson, *Islam in the Modern World*, 217.

Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit.[69]

The focus of divine judgment is on the weighing of man's good works and bad deeds. The Qur'an specifies in Surah 99 that an atom's weight of good or evil could make a difference in the final accounting. Professor Mark Gould, a Harvard-educated sociologist and head of the Department of Sociology at Haverford College, notes that there is a strong structure of religious commitment embedded in this type of eschatology.[70] The individual believer's powerful desire to be preferred by Allah on the final judgment day can engender significant passions to secure future success. Indeed, as Gould writes, it can facilitate a commitment to extraordinary actions, especially to those that could short-circuit Allah's weighing of activities on the scales of justice at the Last Judgment.[71] In some cases, it facilitates supererogatory displays beyond the normal, more traditional religious obligations. Thus, for example, with an act of *jihad*, if a believer survives, he accumulates credits for following God's commands, and if he dies a martyr, he quite possibly gains access to paradise.

The concept of *jihad* can generally be divided into an internal, personal exertion against one's evil desires (sometimes characterized as the greater *jihad*), and an external, military struggle against threats to the Islamic community writ large (sometimes characterized as the lesser *jihad*). Al-Ghazali, speaking on the former, wrote that "everyone who gives himself wholly to God in the war against his own desires (*nafs*) is a martyr when he meets death going forward without turning his back. So the holy warrior is he who makes war against his own desires, as it has been explained by the Apostle of God."[72] It is within this context that Gould explains the influence of the more ascetically-oriented Sufism on the concept of *jihad*. "As all the works prescribed by the canonical law reached their real value when they were considered as symbols of spiritual ideas," Gould writes, "so the true martyr in this system became he that partook of warfare not against the infidels but against his own sensual nature, in order to reach a more spiritual stage."[73] From this perspective, the primary purpose of *jihad* is a struggle

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[69] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*
[70] Gould, 16-17.
[71] Gould, 13, 16-17, 27.
[72] Al-Ghazali quoted in A. J. Wensinck, *Semietische Studien Uit De Nalatenschap* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1941), 96.
[73] See Gould, explanations in the lengthy footnote 13, 11.

against personal sin and impurity. This battle against one's *nafs* appears to be an important element of modern Sufi philosophy. It seems worth noting, however, that based on numerous discussions with Sufis and with both Shia and Sunni clerics, this particular interpretation of *jihad* is not universally accepted by Muslims, and tends to be limited to some Shia and mainly to the more ascetically-oriented Sufis.

Indeed, the more visceral concept of *jihad* is the one propagated by the prophet Mohammed, numerous *hadiths*, the Qur'an itself, as well as by many Islamic jurists and scholars, including the renowned 14th century jurist Ibn Taymiyya. This concept of *jihad* is, Taymiyya wrote, "the *jihad* against the unbelievers (*kuffar*), the enemies of God and his Messenger."[74] The struggle, according to the Qur'an, must continue until there is no more persecution and all mankind's religion belongs to Allah: "And fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and Faith in Allah altogether and everywhere (*Surah* 8:39)."[75] Taymiyya underscores this by asserting that "all lawful warfare is essentially *jihad*"—which is ultimately the quest to make the true religion (understood to be Islam) universal and to recognize that God's word is uppermost: "But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in might (Surah 9:40)."[76] According to Taymiyya, *jihad* "is the best voluntary [religious] act that man can perform."[77] The prophet Mohammad himself is quoted as saying: "The head of the affair is Islam, its central pillar is the *salat* and its summit is the *jihad*."[78] The following statement is also attributed to the prophet: "In Paradise there are a hundred grades with intervals as wide as the distance between the sky and the earth. All these God has prepared for those who take part in *jihad*."[79] The *hadiths* of Al-Bukhari[80] state that the prophet said: "Him whose feet have become dusty in the way of God [*jihad*] will God save from hellfire." The *hadiths* of Muslim[81] attribute the following to the prophet: "A day and a night

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[74] Ibn Taymiyya, "The Religious and Moral Doctrine of *Jihad*," in Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 44.

[75] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*

[76] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*

[77] Taymiyya, 47.

[78] The Prophet Mohammed quoted in Taymiyya, 47.

[79] The Prophet Mohammed quoted in Taymiyya, 47.

[80] The Al-Bukhari are one of the six canonical, authoritative traditions and perhaps also the most widely-distributed one, quoted in Taymiyya, 47.

[81] The Muslim are also one of the six canonical, authoritative traditions, quoted in Taymiyya, 47.

spent in *ribat*.[82] are better than one month spent in fasting and vigils. If he dies [in the fulfillment of this task], he will receive the recompense of his deeds and subsistence, and he will be protected from the Angel of the Grave."

There are significant eschatological benefits connected to the concept of *jihad*. Allah promises forgiveness of sins and admission into paradise as recompense for the struggle in the way of God: "That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: that will be best for you, if ye but knew! He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, and to beautiful Mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme Achievement (Surah Al Saff, 61: 11-12)."[83] According to the Qur'an, Allah shows preference toward those who perform *jihad*:

> Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) hath Allah promised good: but those who strive and fight hath he distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward, Ranks specially bestowed by him and forgiveness and mercy. (*Surah* Al Nisa', 4: 95-96)[84]

In a doctrine where life in the hereafter is gained meritoriously and one's deeds are balanced in divine judgment, the benefits described above are of tremendous consequence.

In this context, *jihad* is not just a mechanism to gain access to paradise. It is also an act of worship, love, and devotion to God that benefits not only the individual performing the act, but also the greater community of believers. To summarize, the majority of classical and modern Islamic commentaries on *jihad* seem to endow it with important supererogatory promises. This complements the primary focus of the entire Islamic orthopractical system, in which every believer is striving to meritoriously gain access to paradise.

Muslims look forward to a hereafter filled with pleasure and sensual gratification, regardless of whether they gain access via a life of meritorious religious obligations, or an act or acts of supererogatory *jihad*. It seems reasonable to assert that based on the evidence

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[82] *Ribat* is a verbal noun meaning remaining at the frontiers of Islam with the intention of defending Islamic territory against the enemies. See Rudolph Peters, 178.

[83] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*

[84] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*

presented in the *hadiths* and the Qur'an, the focus of Islamic paradise is the gratification of the individual believer. Paradise is presented as a reward for man's earthly efforts: "Allah created the heavens and the earth for just ends, and in order that each soul may find the recompense of what it has earned, and none of them be wronged (Surah Al Jathiyah 45: 22)."[85] Accordingly, sinners will also receive their just rewards: "And thou wilt see the sinners that day bound together in fetters; Their garments of liquid pitch, and their faces covered with fire; That Allah may requite each soul according to its deserts; and verily Allah is swift in calling to account (Surah Ibrahim 14: 49-51)."[86] Those who are admitted into paradise can look forward to times of blissful existence, underscored by pleasures provided by Allah. The Islamic afterlife is characterized as an ideal life in a paradise conceived around human concepts of peace, relaxation, honor, and sensual pleasure.

Islam's Initial Expansion. Islam's initial expansion is an important component of the Islamic grand narrative. Right from the beginning, Islam presented itself as a comprehensive global project. As one scholar notes, in Arabic it is defined as *din wa dunya wa dawla* or religion, society, and state.[87] The legacy of the prophet provided a potent fusion of religion, politics, and tribal militarism. Adda Bozeman describes the strategic effect of the expansion as follows: "For a century and a half, under the leadership of Muhammad and his immediate successors, the Islamized peoples of the Near East expand[ed] their religious and political domains with a rapidity unmatched by either of the two Christian realms [the Holy Roman and Byzantine empires]. With incredible ease, they succeeded in creating an empire vaster and more varied in its racial composition than any in the history of the world."[88] On the face of it, the 100-year expansion of Islam that followed on the heels of the prophet's death in 632 A.D. is impressive and astounding. However, a crucial precursor to the expansion was the so-called *ridda* wars.

The collection of tribes that followed the prophet's charismatic leadership began to fracture in the immediate aftermath of his death. The tribal leaders felt that their contractual

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[85] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*
[86] *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.*
[87] Samir, 100.
[88] Adda Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, 2nd ed., (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 357.

loyalty had lapsed after the prophet's death. There were moves to split the Arabian peninsula

into several zones of influence: it was suggested that the prophet's tribe, the Quraysh, would

control one area, the dissenting tribes could control another, and yet a different group of tribes

in the north-east wanted to fracture the alliance further and follow a prophetess named

Sajah.[89] The new Islamic leadership, under the guidance of the former prophet's companions,

"decided to take a bold, hard line on these developments.… They demanded that those who

had once pledged allegiance to Muhammad now owed it to his successor and the Medina

regime."[90] The new leadership elites took to enforcing their decision with "ruthless efficiency."

According to Kennedy, the *ridda* wars [wars against the secessionist or apostate tribes]

> were effectively the first stage of the wider Islamic conquests [and] the dynamics of
> these first conquests were significant. The Islamic state could never survive as a stable
> Arab polity confined to Arabia and desert Syria. The Bedouin had traditionally lived off
> raiding neighboring tribes and extracting payment in various forms from settled
> peoples. It was a fundamental principle of early Islam, however, that Muslims should
> not attack each other: the *umma* was like a large and expanding tribe in the sense that
> all men were members of the same defensive group…. The alternatives were stark:
> either the Islamic elite were to lead the Bedouin against the world beyond Arabia and
> the desert margin, or the Islamic polity would simply disintegrate into its warring
> constituent parts and the normal rivalries and anarchy of desert life would reassert
> themselves once more. Once the *ridda* had been subdued and the tribes of Arabia were
> brought once more under the control of Medina, the leadership had no choice but to
> direct the frenetic military energies of the Bedouin against the Roman and Sasanian
> empires.[91]

Thus, propelled by the certitude of the prophet's ideology, Islamic armies began a campaign to

spread their religion on a global scale. Most scholars concur that Arabs only formed a

percentage of the Muslim armies that conquered the Mediterranean basin and Central Asia.

Historians point to the fact that while "the leaders were Arabs and the language of command

and administration was Arabic" yet "their identity was that of the armies of Islam—that is,

religious identity had replaced the ethnic" identity.[92]

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[89] Kennedy, 55-56.
[90] Kennedy, 56.
[91] Kennedy, 56-57.
[92] Kennedy, 7.

There were several key factors that made the Islamic armies a force to be reckoned with: (1) their religious motivation, (2) the power of the ideas of martyrdom and paradise, (3) the traditional pre-Islamic ideals of loyalty to tribe and kin, (4) the prophet's foundation myths and the admiration of the warrior hero, and (5) the mixture of cultural values associated with nomad or Bedouin society.[93] Additionally, Muslim armies did not overtly seek religious conversion of the regions that they conquered. This would not have been in their immediate interest. It was only possible to extract the *jiza*, or poll tax, from non-Muslims or unbelievers. The conquering Muslim armies left behind great numbers of *dhimmis*, or people of the book (Christians and Jews) who opted to live under Muslim rule, pay taxes, and limit their freedom of religious expression, in exchange for protection and administration under their new rulers. They were not allowed to propagate their faith, to worship in public (to ring bells, have solemn funerals, or engage in outside processions), to build new places of worship, to be functionaries of the state, to be witnesses in legal proceedings, to take daughters of Muslims to be their wives, to be guardians of underage Muslims, to receive inheritances from Muslims, to bear arms, or to ride on horseback. As Cragg writes, *dhimmis* "enjoyed a freedom only to persist, not a freedom to baptize or to receive. It was thus a toleration ensuring freedom to remain but not freedom to 'become,' except in one direction, namely to Islam."[94]

The Islamic expansion was rapid and unprecedented. In the words of the classical historian Victor Davis Hanson, "in that century between 632 and 732, a small and rather impotent Arab people arose to conquer the Sassanid Persian Empire, wrest the entire Middle East and much of Asia Minor from the Byzantines, and establish a theocratic rule across North Africa. In the past the Romans had built a wall to protect their province of Syria from the warring tribes of Arabia.... Yet by the mid-eighth century, the suddenly ascendant kingdom of the Arabs controlled three continents and an area larger than the Roman Empire itself."[95] Scholars tend to agree that the collapse of *pax Romana*, propelled by the Persian Sassanids and the Visigoths and Ostragoths, provided an exploitable strategic vacuum. As Hugh Kennedy

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[93] Kennedy, 370.

[94] Cragg and Speight, 82.

[95] Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Civilization* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 146.

points out, "internal events in the Byzantine and Sasanian empires were fundamental to the success of the Arab conquests. If Muhammad had been born a generation earlier and he and his successors had attempted to send armies against the great empires in, say 600, it is hard to imagine that they would have made any progress at all."[96] Islam surged into that power vacuum and established an enduring presence. This dramatic expansion left an indelible impression on the psychology and ethos of Islam. The following description offers a strategic sense of that impact:

> The breakneck spread of Islam was astounding. By 634, a mere two years after Muhammad's death, Muslim armies were well engaged in the conquest of Persia. Syria fell in 636; Jerusalem was captured in 638. Alexandria was stormed in 641, opening the entire Visigothic realm to the west. Forty years later Muslims were at the gates of Constantinople itself, and from 673 to 677 nearly succeeded in capturing the city. By 681 the Arabs neared the Atlantic, formalizing Islam's incorporation of the old kingdoms of the Berbers. Carthage was taken for good in 698 and their last queen, Kahina, captured, her head sent to the caliph in Damascus. Only seventeen miles now separated Islam from Europe proper. By 715 the Visigoths had been conquered in Spain, and periodic forays into southern France were commonplace. In 718 Arabs had crossed the Pryrenees in large numbers and occupied Narbonne, killing all the adult male inhabitants and selling the women and children into slavery. By 720 they were freely raiding in Aquitane.[97]

The immediate and dramatic political and military success of Mohammad's legacy is significant for several reasons. First, in the eyes of his adherents, it lent compelling legitimacy to the prophet's religious revelations and to his social and political beliefs. How could Allah— and the doctrine of divine unity (*tawhid*) as revealed by the prophet—not be behind the stunning advancement of Islam in so short a period of time? The armies of Allah were imbued with the peculiar nature of their newfound religion, which offered a powerful "connection between war and faith, creating a divine culture that might reward with paradise the slaying of an infidel...killing and pillaging were now in the proper context, acts of piety."[98]

Second, the rapid expansion made permanent the fusion of political and religious realms in Islamic culture. This unitary kingdom, established and radically effective during Islam's

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[96] Kennedy, 370.
[97] Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 146.
[98] Ibid., 147.

period of ascendancy, was thereby firmly embedded and legitimized within Islamic psychology. The state was not seen, as in the beginnings of Christianity, as an instrument of persecution. As Bernard Lewis writes, in Islam "political authority was not a human evil…it was a divine good. The body politic and the sovereign power within it [were] ordained by God himself, to promote faith and to maintain and extend the law…for the Muslim, God's main concern was to help [and] in particular to help them achieve victory and paramountcy in this world."[99]

Third, it created a sense of anticipation and historical determinism with respect to the future of Islam. Muslims came to firmly believe that Islam, as the final and perfect revelation of Allah, was destined for all of mankind. As Hanson puts it, the advance of "Muslims into the Persian, Byzantine, and European realms was considered a natural—or fated—act. The world was no longer bound by national borders or ethnic spheres, but was properly the sole domain of Muhammad—if only his followers were courageous enough to fulfill the prophet's visions."[100] In this sense, "Islam was not a static or reflective religion, but a dynamic creed that saw conquest and conversion as prerequisites for world harmony."[101] In fact, Adda Bozeman argues that "Islam was cohesive as an empire only when in a state of continuous forward motion. As a result of its orientation toward space, it had no fixed territorial contours. Any boundary once reached was due to be transcended by another forward thrust, if not immediately, then in the very near future. The Dar al-Islam was an empire-in-motion…"[102]

Fourth, as the sacred geography expanded, Islamic soteriology demanded that appropriate political and social institutions be established to enable the faithful to meet their orthopractical requirements. Islam's all-encompassing holy law, *shariah*, fulfilled this role. It embraced the entire range of human activity and behavior, and as Lewis notes, was therefore also naturally concerned with the conduct of government.[103] "Since the law, in the Muslim conception, is divine and immutable, that part of it concerned with government shares these attributes," and the Muslim jurist therefore "sees the state as a divine instrument—as a

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[99] Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, 25.
[100] Hanson, *Carnage and Culture*, 147.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, 366.
[103] Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, 28.

necessary and inherent part of God's providential dispensation for mankind."[104] Ultimately, in Islam the principal function of that government, then as now, is to enable the individual believer to lead a good life and meet the orthopractical requirements of the religion.

Islam's historical politico-military expansion has been seen by many Muslims to be an inevitable occurrence. In his writings, Sayyid Qutb described the Islamic imperative in great detail. In *Islam and Universal Peace*, Qutb wrote that "the only use of force throughout the long history of Islam was in order to give people freedom of choice and eliminate the injustices of oppressors who tried to usurp God's divine right to rule and deny Muslims the right to preach their religion."[105] Thus, as Qutb argued, "the aim of the Islamic wars was to keep 'the word of God' supreme on earth by insuring the sovereignty of those who believed in the oneness of God, to allow people the freedom to promote the Islamic welfare and to establish justice and peace in all societies."[106] Yet Qutb's freedom to choose really meant that either one became a Muslim, or one was treated as a second-class citizen. As other scholars have noted, the *dhimma* arrangement only worked when the *dhimmis* themselves surrendered their rights to Islamic political supremacy.

Islamic historical and political imperatives demanded that society throughout Islam's sacred geography be organized according to the principles of Islamic theology and law. The peoples of the book that did not convert to Islam were to be permitted to exist under the restrictive and watchful eyes of the greater Islamic *ummah*. Islam brought this paradoxical "freedom" to its newly conquered realm. The "freedom" and "lack of compulsion" was therefore not true religious liberty or the right of religious self-expression. Islamic theocracy could never recognize another religion because Islam viewed itself as the final true revelation. Only Islam was (and is) viewed by Muslims as the ultimate and perfected culture and civilization for mankind—a culture that permanently fuses church and state to a divine and historical imperative.

The Role of Islamic Jurisprudence. A strategic understanding of Islam requires at least a cursory examination of the central role of Islamic jurisprudence. Islam is, after all, an

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[104] Ibid.
[105] Sayyid Qutb, *Islam and Universal Peace* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977), 14.
[106] Qutb, *Islam and Universal Peace*, 15.

orthopraxis—literally meaning that "law decides practice." The big questions in Islam today are not about the legitimacy or relevancy or accuracy of the Qur'an or the life of the prophet—these are assumed to be unquestionable and a matter of historical record. Rather, the debates are about *how* the Qur'an is applied and *who* decides how it is applied. The law (*sharia*) performs this function. *Sharia* determines orthodoxy and this drives the practice of religion and the daily lives of Muslims.

Islamic jurisprudence is not to be conflated with the American notion of law—which is a much more limited concept designed to protect individual rights and to enforce the laws of a secular Constitutional system of government, with equal accountability on the individual as well as the state. Islamic jurisprudence is not so much concerned with individual rights as it is focused on the rules and obligations that govern the lives of Muslims. The role of Islamic jurisprudence is not to arbitrate with respect to a secular contract (such as the U.S. Constitution), but rather to administer and interpret *sharia* vis-à-vis the Qur'an and traditions of the prophet and thereby to protect Islam writ large. This is a critical concept and connected to the role of government in Islam. In a broad sense, the chief role of Islamic government is seen by most Muslims to be that of the protector of Islam.   More practically speaking, Muslims tend to believe that government should act as the guarantor of the Islamic way of life and the day-to-day practice of Islam. Thus, there seems to be a widely-held consensus that provisionally grants the Islamic state legitimacy as long as it fulfills its role to "protect Islam." The state, religion, and law are therefore inextricably intertwined. As Adda Bozeman points out, in the context of orthodox Islam, "this religious 'law' (sharia) is a comprehensive order of precepts which encompasses not only what we call 'law' but also what we distinguish as philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence, economics, government and foreign relations."[107]

It is difficult for Americans to digest the fact that the Islamic concept of law seems inexorably fused to religion—i.e. that the religious scholar is also the lawyer, or that "religion" gets a vote in all the affairs of the state. Vali Nasr best summarizes this dilemma in the following way: "There is a conflict here between being a 'good' Muslim and being a 'good' citizen. Most Muslims will choose the former, because secularism does not get you to heaven,

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[107] Bozeman, "Covert Action and Foreign Policy," 40.

and the only way to eliminate this problem is that you have to go with 'the master that counts'—the Muslim religion." And it is the jurists and scholars that interpret religion, and not the state.

Questions about interpretation seem ubiquitous in the history Islam. While Mohammad was still alive, his divinely-inspired authority was the absolute rule. After his death however, questions and debates about praxis have permeated Islam. The dramatic successes of Islam's initial expansion produced immediate and practical questions as to how Islam would administer the rapidly growing empire. The problem was that the sacred law "proved disconcertingly ambiguous whenever an attempt was made to define it precisely enough for application to the domain of public or constitutional affairs."[108] With the Islamic empire in its ascendancy and the final arbiter in the cases of such ambiguity—the prophet—no longer available to resolve the disputes, a tension established itself within Islam between notions about the "rightly guided," almost ethereal, imagined Islamic community of the prophet and the real and practical problems of day-to-day political administration. Islamic jurisprudence came to be fractionalized, dominated by the weight and scholarship of men of influence and standing that rose to prominence during times of internal and external crisis. The fact that there are four so-called Sunni (Hanbali, Maliki, Hanafi, and Shafei) and one Shiite (Jafari) school of jurisprudence attests to this reality. Subsequent jurists, scholars, and clerics have tended to attach themselves to these schools of law in order to legitimate the particular school's interpretations, as well as to bolster their own standing within Islam. In a particularly insightful analysis, Bozeman delves into the ambiguous nature of Islamic law and the unresolved relationship between law and political organizations in the Islamic realm:

> The actual medieval records of Islam show, however, that the ulema established a pattern of life and thought that left the community without either a political institution or political rights. Neither state nor government was brought into any relationship to 'man,' either as an individual or as a member of the community at large. Indeed, the concept of the state was not defined at all and the power of government was unlimited by any system of practically effective norms.[109]

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[108] Bozeman, Politics and Culture in International History, 372.
[109] Ibid., 378-79.

Without these norms, there evolved a dichotomy, of sorts, within Islam. There were those who argued, as Al Ghazali famously did, that even if a ruler was unjust or impious, some kind of order was better than no order at all: "The tyranny of a sultan for a hundred years causes less damage than one year's tyranny exercised by the subjects against one another."[110] In other words, better tyranny than anarchy. On the other side, there were those who, according to H.A.R. Gibb, argued that "the Islamic state should be only the public exponent of Islamic ideology, ensuring the security and well-being of the Muslim peoples, and enforcing the Law of Islam but itself subject to that Law; and that the authority of the state derives wholly from the degree to which the state is considered to do so."[111] An example of this type of provisional legitimacy evolved in Iran during the time of the so-called Saffavid pact, when Shiite clerics granted a conditional concordat to the Saffavid rulers, provided that the Saffavids protected the Shiite faith. In this case, as Vali Nasr has observed, "the contract was judged by the *ulema*, or religious scholars, based on whether or not the king protected the law (or Islam)—and not the people."

There is an enduring and historical duality at work in the dichotomy outlined above. On the one hand, Bozeman admires the work of Islamic jurists and how it "contributed to the total intellectual achievement that has earned Muslim learning great repute in the international history of ideas." As she explains, "by preserving the simple and internationally appealing forms into which the Prophet had cast his truth, they [the jurists] made possible the extension of the Empire's ideological frontiers." One might argue that this remains true to this day. However, on the other hand, the jurists' failure "to relate the ideology to the conduct of government and the actual lives of the people made a consolidation of this empire impossible."[112] One final and perceptive historical observation from Bozeman in comparing the Roman sources and practice of law with those of Islam seems worthwhile:

> For the Roman lawyers were statesmen, not theologians. Roman jurisprudence was a science of human relations, not a scholarly exercise upon religious themes. Roman law was thus the product of human intelligence and experience, not the distillation of revealed truth…. The principles to which Roman law and Roman lawyers subscribed

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[110] Al Ghazali quoted in Albert Hourani, op cit, 144.
[111] Gibb quoted in Bozeman, ibid., 379.
[112] Bozeman, 380.

were used to mediate between image and reality, and therefore made the law-state possible. The principles to which the ulema subscribed perpetuated a cleavage between the real and the ideal and thus led to the separation of law and state, of people and government. Unrestrained by any practically applicable principle of law or human rights, the caliphate was bound to become a despotism.[113]

The result of this conflicted process is a host of greater and lesser "supreme authorities" across the so-called Islamic world, from multiple *eminence grise* of Sunni jurisprudence at al-Azhar University and mosque in Cairo, Egypt, to the clerics of distinction in Shiite jurisprudence in Qom, Iran. In Sunni Islam, there are those who study the prophet's traditions (*muhaddith*), those who study the law (*faqih*), and those who study the Qur'an and lead prayers (*imam*); in the Shiite world, there are those who are educated in Islamic theology and law (*mullah*) and those who are widely-acknowledged experts and teachers in Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, and philosophy (*ayatollah*).[114]

In the final analysis, however, there is no single ecclesiastical authority in Islam. To return to the important questions of Islam, the debate about *how* the Qur'an is applied and *who* decides how it is applied is ever present and fractionalized by sect, reputation, and standing across the history of the belief system. As Vali Nasr has commented, "the reality of most of Islamic history is disunity and internal conflict—the notion of a unified Muslim world beneath a single global caliphate has not existed for a very long time, if ever." Superimposed upon this diffusion of legitimacy and authority is the imprint that the prophet bequeathed to Islam—an ideological system that fuses religious, political, legal, and cultural spheres into one comprehensive realm.

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[113] Ibid., 381.
[114] Samir, op. cit, 57.

Islam's Historical Imperative: Key Points

- *Al-islam din wa dawla*—Islam is both religion and state. Islam is an ideological system that fuses religious, political, legal, and cultural spheres into one comprehensive realm.

- **The Prophet:**
  - Mohammad was a master strategist who wedded political pragmatism with *realpolitik* and "blood and iron" in similar fashion as Bismarck did for the German states.
  - Mohammad did not always resort to force; he demonstrated keen instinct, was a shrewd pragmatist, and surged, consolidated, and withdrew as necessary.
  - From a religious perspective, Mohammad led the faithful in bringing the so-called "rightly-guided" divine message to an ever-increasing geographical area. From a secular perspective, he displayed dogged tenacity, visionary leadership, and compelling personality and charisma.
  - There are few historical vectors as significant as the fact that Islam was ascendant at the time of the prophet's death. The unique circumstances of his life provide Islam with a perduring message

- **The Quran**
  - The Qur'an represents the final revelation of God in that it came after the Torah was revealed to the Jews and the Gospels of the New Testament were given to the Christians.
  - The tension between the Meccan and Medinan *surahs* has created avenues for multiple opinions on various aspects of the Qur'an; for centuries, Muslim scholars have debated how to interpret the Qur'an.
  - The conflict between "strict constructionists" (e.g. Al-Ghazali) and "progressives" (e.g. Averroes) has usually favored the former, because the latter can all-to-easily be accused of being innovators and of going against the weight of Islamic tradition.

- **Islamic Metaphysics**
  - Islamic doctrine about man's nature (*fitra*) holds that man is created by God with a balanced soul or a neutral state of mind, and it is the surrounding environment (primarily family and society) which either promotes good or encourages evil in man.
  - The emphasis of the entire system of Islamic belief is: *La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah*—there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is Allah's prophet.
  - Islam is a doctrine of the unity of Allah—the all-encompassing, all-prevailing, all-powerful, absolute monotheism of Allah. Islam operates on this principle by requiring complete submission to the certitude of that unity of Allah.
  - Islam is an orthopractical (works-based) doctrine that it provides, with Allah's guidance, a set of rules that enable the faithful to earn their salvation *by their own merit*. Islam is therefore predominantly a system of rules and law, of practices and observances.
  - The focus of divine judgment is on the weighing of man's good works and bad deeds. The individual believer's powerful desire to be preferred by Allah on the final judgment

day can engender significant passions to secure future success. In some cases, it facilitates displays beyond the normal, more traditional religious obligations.

- **Islam's Initial Expansion**
  - Islam's initial expansion is an important component of the Islamic grand narrative. Right from the beginning, Islam presented itself as a comprehensive global project.
  - There were several key factors that made the Islamic armies a force to be reckoned with: (1) their religious motivation, (2) the power of the ideas of martyrdom and paradise, (3) the traditional pre-Islamic ideals of loyalty to tribe and kin, (4) the prophet's foundation myths and the admiration of the warrior hero, and (5) the mixture of cultural values associated with nomad or Bedouin society.
  - The immediate and dramatic political and military success of Mohammad's legacy is significant for several reasons: (1) in the eyes of his adherents, it lent compelling legitimacy to the prophet's religious revelations and to his social and political beliefs, (2) the rapid expansion made permanent the fusion of political and religious realms in Islamic culture, and (3) it created a sense of anticipation and historical determinism with respect to the future of Islam.

- **Islamic Jurisprudence**
  - Islam is an orthopraxis—"law decides practice." The big questions in Islam today are not about the legitimacy, relevancy or accuracy of the Qur'an or the prophet—these are assumed to be unquestionable and a matter of historical record. Rather, the debates are about *how* the Qur'an is applied and *who* decides how it is applied. The law (*sharia*) performs this function. *Sharia* determines orthodoxy and this drives the practice of religion and the daily lives of Muslims.
  - Islamic jurisprudence is not so much concerned with individual rights as it is focused on the rules and obligations that govern the lives of Muslims.
  - Questions about interpretation are ubiquitous in the history of Islam. While Mohammad was still alive, his divinely-inspired authority was the absolute rule. Since his death, questions and debates about praxis have permeated Islam. Islamic jurisprudence came to be fractionalized, dominated by the weight and scholarship of men of influence and standing that rose to prominence during times of internal and external crisis. The fact that there are four so-called Sunni (Hanbali, Maliki, Hanafi, and Shafei) and one Shiite (Jafari) school of jurisprudence attests to this reality.

Islam's Modern Resurgence.[115]

The historical imperatives discussed above form a backdrop or tapestry that has shaped—and continues to shape—the evolution of Islam's grand narrative. To varying degrees, the timeless example of the life of the prophet, the supremacy of the Qur'an, the doctrines of Islamic metaphysics, the historical momentum of Islam's initial expansion, and the intertwined yet conflicted nature of Islamic jurisprudence form the cultural ethos in the minds of Muslims throughout the world today. Some Muslims simply seem to take solace in the historical greatness of the Islam of antiquity. To them, Islam's imperatives are a means of cultural identity, especially in a world awash in multi-culturalism. To other Muslims, the examples of the prophet and Islam's initial expansion are a sharper edge—a form a modern day clarion call to take up the struggle for the greater good of Islam. That said, a strategic understanding of Islam would be incomplete without an examination of the "modern" factors that have (and are) contributing to Islam's resurgence. These factors have shaped Islam in the 20th and 21st centuries. In particular, they seem to reveal an enduring struggle for "ownership" of Islam's grand narrative from *within* Islam: (1) the collapse of Arab nationalism in the Levant; (2) the rise of Saudi Arabia and the petro kingdom; (3) the 1979 Iranian revolution; and (4) the Afghan wars or (jihads or civil wars) from 1979 to the present day.

The Collapse of Arab Nationalism. Arab nationalism is important because it shaped the modern Arab states, entrenched the domination of the state over the economy, gave rise to a nationalist response against America, laid the grounds for left-of-center politics, and promised the grand final solution to the Middle East dilemmas that arouse at the conclusion of World War II. The fight against Israel and so-called Western Imperialism began in earnest in 1952 in Egypt when Gamal Nasser, with the aid of the lefist-nationalist Free Officers, launched a successful military coup. The subsequent 1956 Suez Crisis made Nasser into a hero in the Arab world and gave birth to Arab nationalism. The Suez Crisis, precipitated by Nasser's nationalization of the canal, was a fiasco for the French and British, who were ultimately forced to withdraw their forces under pressure from the Eisenhower Administration, which was

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[115] This section on Islam's modern resurgence is based in part on extensive and detailed notes from Dr. Vali Nasr's "Islam and Politics" lectures at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Tufts University, Boston) from 21 October to 4 November, 2008.

dealing with the broader context of the Cold War and the Soviet Union. The expulsion of the European powers, and the negation of highly successful Israeli military operations in the Sinai, served to heighten expectations that the West would be pushed out in other areas of the Middle East as well, and that Israel would, in Nasser's words, be "pushed into the sea." Suez was therefore a major, though momentary, victory for the "locals against the West," and it initially looked like it would bear further fruit. Following the Suez Crisis, Syria collapsed to Baathism, the monarchy in Iraq faltered, and pan-Arab nationalism seemed to be succeeding in Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus.

Arab nationalism, which at its core was really leftist nationalism, promised a secular concept that sought the "glorious Arab socialist" state as its goal, and not an Islamic state. The attractiveness of Socialism to the Arab states of the day was logical. In the post-Colonial, post-World War II environment, the newly established states of the Muslim world were looking at how to transform themselves as rapidly as possible in order to alter the balance of power and compete with the West. As such, the more gradualistic Anglo-American processes were not exactly models of time efficiency. However, Stalinism was attractive to the Arabs because from their perspective, he took a backward, Serf-like, agrarian system, and rapidly transformed it into a modern, centrally planned state that seemed to be able to compete with the West. Hence, Marxism was an attractive model of rapid transformation and modernization. However, just as Marxism failed to produce long-term results in the Soviet Union, so Arab Socialism never really worked, except in creating bloated public bureaucracies, weak economic development, and authoritarian governments.

The myth of Arab nationalism crashed in the War of 1967. The Israeli pre-emptive air strikes and the subsequent 6-day rout of Arab armies signified the most devastating defeat that had ever been dealt to a modern Arab State. In a nutshell, Egypt lost the Sinai, Syria lost the Golan Heights, the Jordanians lost the West Bank, and Israel secured Jerusalem. 1967 was a humiliation, not just to the governments of Egypt or Syria or Jordan, but more so because it showed that the pan-Arab socialist ideology could not stand up to Israeli military power supported by Western arms and influence. As Vali Nasr describes it, "if Arab nationalism was able to soar so fast and high because it had unwittingly tapped into the Muslim psychosis about

Islamic decline, its crash and loss of territory was doubly damming because it played into the same grand narrative." Thus, Nasser's restoration of the pan-Arab Islamic expectation died in the 1967 war—or put differently, in six days, the Israeli military made the case for resurgent Islam and Islamic fundamentalism. The Egyptians reacted the same way that the Pakistanis did in 1971 when they lost East Pakistan—they turned to religion in order to help deal with the defeat.

The disciples of Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood, previously arrested and tortured by the Egyptian government, now wore their religion proudly. It was as if they were saying: "you are praying in the direction of Karl Marx and not in the direction of Mecca, therefore you lost!" Islamic fundamentalism thus assumed the mantle of the narrative and took on the role of the protector of Islam. As the Arab governments began a morbid decline, their collapse fueled a resurgence of Islam. An entire generation of young Egyptians who were educated at home and had graduated with degrees and expectations for higher paying jobs became a fruitful recruiting medium for the Muslim Brotherhood as the state was unable to deliver jobs and promises.

When Nasser died in office in 1970, his vice president, Anwar Sadat, assumed the Presidency. Sadat immediately had to deal with challenges from Ali Sabri and the Arab Socialist Union, which was still hanging on to power in Egypt. In order to consolidate his power, Sadat reached out to the Muslim Brotherhood, opened up the prisons, and let them organize on the university campuses. This was a form of *realpolitik* by Sadat because he needed the Muslim Brotherhood to combat Ali Sabri and the Arab Socialists. Sadat even took it a step further and became the so-called "believer president," showing up in mosques, investing money in the restoration of old mosques, and publicly claiming that Egypt was a Muslim and not a secular country. Sadat's carefully calculated shift in state language about religion built a groundswell of public support and capitalized on the changing moods that had grown out of the 1967 defeat. In a twist of irony, the radicals within the Muslim Brotherhood that assassinated Sadat in 1981 were the very same "Frankensteins" that he helped to create during the earlier part of his tenure as president. Within a few years, every major Socialist and leftist organization, trade

union, and bureaucracy was crushed. The Muslim Brotherhood controlled the campuses and actively organized itself within society.

By 1973, Sadat determined that he would have to go to war with Israel in order to level the playing field. Traditionally known in the West as the Yom Kippur war, the 1973 war was actually initiated and fought during Ramadan. In other words, the religious connotation is unavoidable—the Arab armies "fought while they were fasting." In the first 48 hours of the conflict, it appeared as if the combined armies of Egypt and Syria might prevail, thus ameliorating the humiliating and lop-sided losses of the 1967 war. While Israel eventually prevailed, the 1973 war was in many ways a vindication for the newly established direction in Arab politics and the resurgence of Islam.

However, by the end of the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood was becoming too big and too powerful for Sadat, who was beginning to turn toward the West and engage with Israel in the Camp David framework. Sadat, who had used the Muslim Brotherhood to consolidate his power and emasculate the socialists, had no other ideological alternatives to use against the brotherhood. His only card to play was outright repression, which he ultimately pursued, leading to a full-scale confrontation between the Egyptian state and the Muslim Brotherhood. The first Salafi or Takfiri units in Egypt were created in this confrontation between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood. The brotherhood took Sayyid Qutb's arguments to their *extremis*, declaring society as corrupt and withdrawing from it, just like the prophet had pulled out of Mecca to go to Medina. From a larger perceptive, Sadat became a casualty of this confrontation when he was assassinated. But more importantly, the legacy that he bequeathed to Egypt would fuel the resurgence of Islamism within the Egyptian state.

The Egyptian government of Hosni Mubarak, in power since Sadat's 1981 assassination, has been able to stay in office through a combination of sometimes brutal repression, "carrot and stick" tactics, and what Vali Nasr has called a deliberate policy of "reverse rendition," whereby the government exports its radicals to other places like New York, London, Kabul, and Islamabad, thereby avoiding the need to jail them in Egypt. Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood has metastasized and spread to areas including Algeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Europe. In Egypt today, there is no clear peer competitor for the Muslim Brotherhood's

resurgent Islamic ideology. While Islamism may not carry weight in Mubarak's cabinet, it finds plenty of empathy on the Arab street, and the use of sheer brutality by the Mubarak regime in order to sustain its own in power has only further radicalized the Muslim Brotherhood, whose followers understand that the West often supports the Egyptian regime.

Saudi Arabia and Oil. The second major factor in the modern resurgence of Islam is the emergence of Saudi Arabia as a Gulf power state. The origins of the Saudi state are familiar to most in the post-9/11 world. Saudi Arabia came into being in the 18th century as a marriage of convenience between Wahhabism, a sectarian, literalist, non-mystical expression of Islam, and the indigenous Saudi tribe. At the end of World War I, there was a burst of political energy led by Ibn Saud, who mobilized the Wahhabis and took over the Hijaz, consolidating his hold of the territory and for the first time, joining the Hijaz with the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. The initial capital was a little oasis named Jeddah.

There are several Saudi distinctives that are strategically important. First, Saudi Arabia is the only Middle Eastern country that was not occupied by European colonialism nor was it born out of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the world wars of the 20th century. Second, it is a state that was born with religion at its core. The only other example of this kind of Islam, built as it was on the backs of tribal conquest, is the Taliban (with the Pashtun tribes) in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This stands in direct contradistinction to states like Turkey, which was built on the Kamalist, secular model. Third, Saudi Arabia would not have existed had it not been for support from the United States. It is the only Middle Eastern country with this distinction. The United States arrived in Saudi Arabia to explore for oil; once oil was found, the United States helped to draw the boundaries and distinguish it from the Arab emirates, Iraq, and Jordan, which at the time were British holdings. Furthermore, the United States (as a non-Colonial power) gave oil royalties and basic financial support to the house of Saud thereby granting it legitimacy.

Saudi Arabia remained relatively detached from its regional environment until the middle of the 20th century, when it was forced to confront the challenges presented by Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism. Nasser's politics were essentially republican in nature, thereby posing a threat to most ruling Middle Eastern monarchies, including Iraq, which fell in the 1958 to a

Baathist-led, army supported coup, and Libya, which collapsed in 1969 to a coup led by Muammar Gadaffi. In attempting to thwart Nasser's regional politics, Saudi Arabia tied its existence to the identity of Islam itself by elevating its role as the owner and protector of Islam's two holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, and simultaneously intertwined the survival of the House of Saud with the existence of the Saudi state. In the 1960s, this was a unique approach in the Middle East, especially as the dominant theme was Arab secular nationalism. Islam provided Saudi Arabia's only counterbalance to Nasser's wild popularity on the Arab street in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez crisis. As such, Saudi Arabia rapidly became an island and bastion for the Muslim Brotherhood. Many brotherhood exiles wound up in Saudi Arabia, working in universities and religious councils for many decades as the Saudis came to bankroll them in order help bolster the Saudi image as the only truly Islamic state. The Islamist ideology was deliberately incubated in Saudi Arabia, well before Nasser's pan-Arab nationalist movement collapsed, before the Iranian revolution, and before Anwar Sadat was assassinated.

In the 1960s and 70s, nationalism in Saudi Arabia was synonymous with Islam and meant promoting Islam and advocating Islamic causes, in the same way that advocating Arabism was key for Nasser. Saudi Arabian Arabs preferred to think of themselves as "Muslims" rather than "Arabs." Yet Wahhabism, the kingdom's official version of Islam, was not content to remain within its own domain. Wahhabism needed to spread its message—after all, Saudi Arabia was created by Wahhabism's tribal conquest, a Wahhabi jihad for the "greater good" and in the cause of "true Islam." The Saudis in Jeddah were as firmly convinced of their cause (Islam) as the intellectuals at Cairo University were in theirs (secular Arabism). In other words, for every fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood member that the Saudis funded, the Nasserists promoted another secular Arab nationalist. The Saudi monarch, King Faysal, was the anti-Nasser of the 1960s; he made Islam part of the Saudi identity and claimed the title of the genuine "believer king." All of this amounted to an unvarnished ideological war between Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

In the process, the Saudis were busily constructing a new and modern Islamic community—an *ummah*. The Muslim Brotherhood helped to confirm this identity. King Faysal helped propagate their ideas, driven by a desire to define the Arab Muslim world in non-secular

terms vis-à-vis the competition of Arab nationalism. This effort, launched by the Saudis in the 1960s and largely continuing to this day, involved wide-spread and global funding of mosques, religious schools, Islamic literature, all with a distinct Wahhabi flavor.

A major turning point in the competition between the two states came in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War with Israel. After the dramatic Arab losses of the war, the momentum changed. King Faysal began to stand up to Nasser in public and began to challenge him. In Yemen, which was engulfed in a civil war, Nasser provided Egyptian troops and supplies in an attempt to defeat the monarchy. King Faysal began to fund a royalist insurgency to combat the nationalist movement in Yemen. By all accounts, Egypt's best troops were in Yemen helping to defend nationalism when the war of 1967 broke out. King Faysal helped to defeat Arab nationalism in Yemen, then worked to defeat Nasser in Cairo.

A second regional turning point involved the 1973 Yom Kippur war. In the events leading up to the war, Egypt increasingly put pressure on Saudi Arabia to help the Arab cause. As a result, King Faysal made it clear to the United States that its support of Israel was damaging to the Saudis. Once the war broke out, the Saudis led an Arab oil boycott against the West, and this helped King Faysal gain leverage vis-à-vis the other Arabs. While the Saudis did not send a single soldier to the fight, they seemed more powerful globally than the Arab armies that actually did the fighting. The leadership of the oil boycott made Saudi Arabia the leader of the Arab world and gave it dramatic new stature and clout. The oil boycott accomplished for King Faysal what the Suez crisis had done for Nasser—it raised his *cachet* and made him regionally prominent. In parallel, and of strategic significance, is the fact that this also gave new impetus to Islam, since Saudi Arabia was not Arab nationalist, but rather a distinctly Islamic state. In the aftermath of the 1973 oil boycott, the royal kingdom bankrolled its influence on a global scale by placing clerics in control of funds and education and actively burnishing its image as a newly emergent Muslim state. King Faysal, now widely known as the "believer king," spent lavishly on things like international Islamic education and international Islamic economics conferences.

In summary, the claim that Wahhabism represents the true Islam is at the very core of Saudi Arabia's identity and is woven into the fabric of its existence. The Saudi kingdom is not

defined by language, by race, or by territorial boundaries. It is defined by the marriage of the Saudi tribe and the Wahhabist belief system, and the growth of Saudi power occurred on the backs of that resurgent Islamist ideology. Between 1967 and 1973, Saudi Arabia vaulted from second class to premier status as an Arab state. It is of strategic significance that Saudi Arabia's status as a global player propelled Islam to the center of the global stage.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Revolution is as significant for resurgent Islam as the Russian Revolution was for Communism. In one sense, one can look at the Iranian Revolution as a local phenomenon driven by local factors, but this would be strategically short-sighted. The aim of this paper is not to explore the tactical reasons *why* the revolution happened, but rather to dwell on its protracted strategic effects. Although Khomeini borrowed liberally from Marxist revolutionary doctrine and class war strategies, at the end of the day, the revolution was Islamic—Khomeini's answer to all the problems with the Shah's secular state was Islam, and the revolution became universalized very rapidly.

In many ways, the Iranian Revolution created an air of inevitability—it fostered the notion that Islam could actually deliver and carry out a modern revolution and create a Muslim state. Mawdudi had talked and written about it in Pakistan, but his "top-down" model had never been implemented. According to Nasr, the success of the revolution created a phenomenon—in that the typical 1960s and 1970s dissidents and anarchists were exotic and interesting, but immaterial because they have not produced results—but Islamic resurgence in Iran produced a tangible result. Of greater strategic significance was the fact that at the macro level, Khomeini's Islamism had succeeded where Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism and Socialism had failed. Essentially, Khomeini carried out an anti-imperial, anti-Western revolution, and in the process converted many Marxist intellectuals and aspiring revolutionaries into Islamists. If you were a Marxist revolutionary in 1979, in post-1979, you became an Islamic revolutionary.

There were undoubtedly very powerful leftist, Communist elements in the Iranian Revolution—in addition to the Islamist element. It was genuinely a war of classes, it wanted to shatter the state and build a new model that was highly anti-Western, anti-Imperalist, and anti-Colonial. It was anti-Western not in a sense of anti-culture, but rather because it positioned Islamism as a foil for the Third World against the West, along the lines of a continuation of the

nationalist liberation movements. Thus, the Iranian revolution merged the radical elements of leftist Marxism with the Islamist ideology of Qutb and Mawdudi. Ultimately however, the revolution was not cast as a "hodge podge" revolution—a messy fight that Khomeini won—but rather it was (and is) portrayed as an Islamic revolution. In other words, as Nasr describes it, this was not a bunch of "wooly-brained" amateurs; instead, the grand narrative was that history was on their side and Islamism is a powerful and capable ideology.

The potency of the Iranian revolution and its sharp Islamic edge made it relevant in the Third World. The exportable message of the revolution was: "If you like liberation from the West, then Marxism did not do it, Arabism did not do it, and elsewhere there is nothing else that is delivering what we can offer." This was (and is) an ideology of dissent, rejection, and liberation, and it had the effect of immediately casting the other Arab Islamic governments as "status quo" powers trying to hold on, while the Islamic revolution became the voice of popular dissent.

Khomeini had much broader ambitions that just the Shia world. He spoke and manipulated the language of Shiism, but he also saw Shiism as an idea for the rest of the world. However, Khomeini's arguments about the supreme jurist (a role that he created for himself as the chief ayatollah and head of state) were completely unidentifiable to Sunni Islam, because Khomeini's arguments were based on Shia history and Shia jurisprudence. As a religious leader, Khomeini did not look attractive to his Sunni counterparts, and his appeal failed to win converts. Sunni Islamists did not follow the Iranian model the way Khomeini wanted, but rather sought to emulate it and fit it to their own circumstances. This was not Khomeini's design—he wanted to upend the entire world, but not along sectarian lines. Rather, he wanted to draw a line between secularism (the West) and religion (Iran's Muslim state). Thus, in the so-called Muslim world where Islam is continuously being debated, it was the Shias that grabbed the spot light in 1979. Khomeini successfully hijacked the narrative of resurgent Islam and turned it into an international success and a victory for Shiism.

Other Muslim governments evaluated what happened in Iran and studied what the Shah did wrong. They took note that his army did not even have riot gear, and was not trained and equipped to protect the regime. Instead, it was "on the front" with Iraq when it should have

been taking care of the regime. As one observer quipped, "the Shah was no Saddam Hussein."

They concluded that the Shah had been too permissive. Yet they also understood that they

now had to compete with Iran for Islamic legitimacy and prestige. New stadium-sized mosques

were built, presidents were seen at prayer on Fridays, leaders grew beards, and the boundaries

between secular states and Islamic states were emphasized. These long-term strategic effects

carried into the 1980s and 1990s and amounted to strategies of survival for incumbent regimes,

which simultaneously did not stray too far from using police brutality, internal intelligence

organizations, and other tools of regime repression. In many ways, Islamic governments

worked hard to co-opt the Islamist narrative. As a calculated strategy of survival, these

governments adopted Islamic symbology and became much more "tolerant" of Islam, as was

the case, for example in Egypt and Pakistan. The political elites quickly realized that there was

little, if any, benefit from being rabidly secular, and many Muslim states started to look the

same—with brutal police forces, yet more tolerant to Islamism.

Another insidious strategic effect of the Iranian revolution was that Iran became a

mentor state to revolutionary movements throughout the globe, much like the Soviets had also

done. Delegations of Islamists came to Iran, and the Iranians provided them with support. Like

most revolutionaries, Iran wanted to export its ideas to other places, and Iran saw this as a

function of its own success. One notable example is Pakistan, which has a significant Shiite

minority population. A 1977 military coup had brought General Zia-ul-Haq to power in

Pakistan. In 1979 and in the wake of the Iranian revolution, General Zia proclaimed that

Pakistan was a religious country. But Shias argued that they were not a member of Pakistan (as

such) and were not going to pay taxes to a Sunni government. Over 100,000 Shias

demonstrated in the streets of Islamabad, forcing General Zia to relent, and creating major

schisms within society. Khomeini began funneling money and resources into Pakistan because

he thought the Shias would be receptive to the ideology of revolution. Iran used the clerics and

their networks to distribute funds. Khomeini also looked at Iraq, with whom Iran engaged in an

8-year war, as well as other Gulf States. While all of these ventures eventually failed, Iran

continues to propagate its Islamist ideology and indeed, seems increasingly re-emergent today

as it seeks to foment trouble in places like Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, and

Jordan.[116] Some knowledgeable observers go so far as to assert that the future success of Islamic resurgence as a rival to the Western model of building a modern state is more tied to Iran than to the success of other Islamic resurgence movements like Al Qaida.

The Afghan War(s). The fourth major factor in the modern resurgence of Islam is the Afghan war that began with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. One frame of reference for this conflict is that of a liberation propagated by local guerillas in order to eject the Soviet Army during the Cold War. This perspective is a narrow, tactical analysis; there is a much broader narrative. This strategic version begins by conceiving of the Soviet-backed Communist regime that came to power via a military coup in Afghanistan as a last-ditch, modernizing, hyper-secular "Kamalist" attempt complete with land reform, modernization, and the emancipation of women. Admittedly, it was the Stalinist version of modernization, but it was modernization nonetheless. The Soviets and the Soviet-backed regime went after the clerics, the mosques, and religious education, and infringed on tribal prerogatives over territory and ownership of land. All of these actions provoked a resistance in the tribal-coded *hinterlands* of Afghanistan—where the Communists were viewed as atheists and secularists—and helped to galvanize a resistance movement in the name of religion and Islam.

Resurgent Islam was right in the mix from the beginning. Communism was rife in the Soviet-dominated Afghan military, but in the university campuses in Kabul, it was Islamism that carried the day. Ahmad Shah Massoud and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were students of Islam and they had read Qutb and Mawdudi. It was the Pashtun tribes *combined* with Islamism that formed the locus of the resistance to the Communist modernization of the Afghan state.

How the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan became interested in the resistance and in supporting the Afghan fighters for their own strategic reasons has been well-documented elsewhere. Saudi and U.S. funds were funneled to the Mujahideen via Pakistan through Jamaat-e-Islami channels, which meant that from the very beginning, the efforts were linked to Islamists in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. As Pakistan looked to the north, General Zia-ul-Haq (in control of Pakistan at the time) was determined that the war would not produce a Frankenstein to the north of Pakistan. He insisted that Pakistan would be in charge of training,

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[116] See, for example, Amir Taheri, "As U.S. Retreats, Iran Fills the Void," *Wall Street Journal*, May 4, 2009.

distribution, and funding of the Mujahideen. In a divide-and-conquer approach, he ensured that Pakistan distributed weapons and training to as many different Mujahideen groups as possible, thereby (1) creating a situation where there were too many different and fractured interests and (2) ensuring that no single group would become too powerful. Pakistan had favorite commanders and generated "rent seeking" behavior from them, but as a whole, the Pakistani approach to training and arming the Mujahideen was to diffuse the power amongst the various groups.

Once the Soviet grip on Afghanistan began to unravel, the strategic lesson for the Muslim world was that not only can Islam bring down a state like it did in Iran in 1979, but it can also liberate itself from and defeat a global superpower. In this sense, Khomeini had proven that Islam could have a Lenin and could generate a successful revolutionary ideology, and the Afghan Mujahideen had proven that Islam could have a liberator and could generate a liberation movement. Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian and Muslim Brotherhood activist, evangelized the case of the Afghan Mujahideen to the Arab Muslim world. After spending time in Afghanistan during the war, he returned to the Arab world with the message that Islam had "found a way to do liberation." Azzam's generation was the forerunner of Hammas. He argued that Afghanistan was the core of a jihad that would liberate Muslims everywhere. With a distinct eye for Palestine, he argued that winning the *jihad* in Afghanistan would be the beginning of victory for Muslims everywhere. The strategic effect of the Afghan war was that it caused Islam to grow from an ideology of revolution (Iran) to an ideology of liberation.

Unfortunately, the United States allowed Afghanistan to be portrayed as a successful *jihad*, and not as a war that was made possible and financed and supported by the United States (and Pakistan and Saudi Arabia). The clarion call of Islam was that the "power of the word of God" brought down the Soviets. In retrospect, some argue that it was a strategic mistake that the United States did not want to have its "finger prints" on the struggle. While this is understandable in the Cold War context vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, a different narrative of the struggle could have strategically changed the perception of how and why it was successful.

An additional strategic effect of the war was that it generated an unprecedented level of technological competence amongst the Mujahideen. Indeed, some describe it as a leap in

technical skills that came from this war—the Islamist ideology became potent in a practical as well as ideological sense. It produced competence in the technologies of violence (surveillance, bomb making, propaganda, etc) and directly helped to create the *jihadi* military culture of today. The Afghan *jihad* produced fighters. While Mawdudi had talked about how to organize the state, Osama Bin Laden talked about how to win a battle. Mawdudi was a comfortable academic without an appreciation for winning a fight, whereas Bin Laden focused on how to plant a car bomb but had no appreciation for how to organize a society or a state. The Afghani *jihadists* had no notion of how to govern—they were fighters. How this may yet prove to be their undoing will be discussed later in this paper.

The Afghan *jihad* never produced a functioning state, but rather gave rise to an endless civil war with leaders and tribal commanders like Massoud and Hekmatyar competing for influence and power. Kabul was virtually destroyed in a fierce civil war between Massoud and Hekmatyar, who virtually shelled Kabul into rubble. In the South, there was a lot of disgruntlement among Pashtun fighters who realized that something had gone wrong. Mullah Omar, the ethnically Pashtun de facto leader of the Taliban, was provoked into action by the corruption of a warlord who was ruling in Kandahar. The rise of the Taliban was a reaction to the fact that the *jihad* in Afghanistan never really rebuilt a state. The Taliban subsequently tried to set up a functioning state and to govern it according to Islamic law; they wasted little time when they arrived in Kabul. "The first act of symbolic—and horribly real—violence after the fall of Kabul was the torture of the former leftist President Najibullah. The Taliban cut off his testicles and dragged his battered body behind a Jeep. Then they shot him and hanged his corpse from a street lamp. As a sign of his citified debauchery and corruption, the ex-president's pockets were stuffed with money and cigarettes were pressed into his broken fingers. The aim of the Taliban's assault on Kabul was to turn it into a City of God."[117]

Once the Taliban gained a foothold in Afghanistan, the Pakistani government came to believe that the Pashtun tribal group was the only power broker able to maintain effective control of Afghanistan. In terms of *realpolitik*, the Taliban found empathy with the Pakistani political establishment because, as Giles Kepel puts it, their Deobandi theories made them "the

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[117] Ian Burma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 44.

bitter foes of 'ungodly' Shiite Iran, India, and Russia" and "most of the Taliban belonged to the Pashtun ethnic group, which was strong on the Pakistani northwest frontier around Peshawar and staffed the Pakistani officer corps and special services."[118]

In the decade of the 1990s, a great deal of intermingling occurred in the porous border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan, where Deobandi clerics ran orphanages, schools, refugee camps, and seminaries. The Deobandi movement is a Sunni Islamic resurgence movement that started in India and derives its name from the town of Deoband where the main seminary is located. As Afghanistan continued to convulse in civil war—a process of "state shattering and 'liberating'"—the Deobandi-fueled Taliban tightened their grip, eviscerated the former Socialist Afghan state, and focused on three main governmental functions only: morality, commerce, and war.[119] According to Kepel, the Taliban imposed the strictures of Deobandi norms on all citizens: on Fridays, the enormous sports Kabul sports stadium, formerly built by the Soviet Union, "was enlivened by the flagellation of drinkers, the amputation of the limbs of thieves, and the execution of murderers by the families of their victims, who were lent guns for the purpose."[120] In terms of commerce, "After the Taliban took control of most of the country, commerce between Central Asia and Pakistan expanded considerably, as did the contraband goods brought from the free port of Dubai and traffic in heroin destined for American, Russian, and European markets.… Dealers and transporters clearly benefited from a regime in which the near absence of state power allowed them to prosper untrammeled by taxes and regulations."[121] In terms of war, the Taliban solidified their grip on Afghanistan while simultaneously providing shelter for a host of mobilized Islamists like Osama bin Laden, whose genius in Afghanistan was in how he rolled up two strands of resurgent Islam—the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Saudi Wahhabi ideologues—into one Islamist organization. Thus, Qutb's Salafist Islam and its call to separate from society as a religious community and then wage a war on the larger society, and Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi Islam, with its roots in "strict constructionist" school of Hanbali jurisprudence, were melded

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[118] Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: In the Trail of Political Islam*, trans. Anthony Roberts (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 228.

[119] Ibid., 230.

[120] Ibid, 231.

[121] Ibid, 231.

together in the crucible of Afghanistan and turned into an ideology of liberation, first to fight against the Soviets, then to fight against the United States. There was no rehabilitation for these fighters after the war. They could not simply return home to "sit behind a desk." In the words of Vali Nasr, they were like "unexploded torpedoes looking for a target." The Arab fighters that left to go home after liberating Afghanistan were never "demobilized" or "reabsorbed" into society. Ironically, according to today's Islamist grand narrative, the Taliban have basically taken the place of the Mujahideen in their fight against the Soviets, and are fighting another war of liberation against another superpower in the form of the United States.

In summary, Afghanistan was a fortuitous and strategic event for resurgent Islam. Violence had failed to create a revolution in Egypt or Pakistan, but in Afghanistan, it gave birth to a liberation movement against the Soviet state. There are some who argue that without Afghanistan, the urban guerilla phase of resurgent Islam would have died out. The skills acquired in Afghanistan provided the impetus for a new wave of Islamist violence in the 1990s and beyond. The net strategic effect of the Afghan war was therefore to (1) give resurgent Islam the claim that it could win a war of liberation and defeat a superpower, and (2) lay the ideological groundwork, create the human networks, and train the shock troops for resurgent Islam's next *jihad*.

Islam's Modern Resurgence: Key Points

- A strategic understanding of Islam requires an examination of the "modern" factors that have (and are) contributing to Islam's resurgence. They reveal an enduring struggle for "ownership" of Islam's grand narrative from *within* Islam: (1) the collapse of Arab nationalism; (2) the rise of Saudi Arabia and the petro kingdom; (3) the 1979 Iranian revolution; and (4) the Afghan wars or (jihads or civil wars) from 1979 to the present day.

- **The Collapse of Arab Nationalism:**
    - Arab nationalism shaped the modern Arab states, entrenched the domination of the state over the economy, gave rise to a nationalist response against America, and laid the grounds for left-of-center politics.
    - Arab nationalism promised a *secular* concept that sought the "glorious Arab socialist" state (not an Islamic one) as its goal.
    - In the post-Colonial, post-World War II environment, new Islamic states sought to rapidly transform themselves to alter the balance of power and compete with the West. Stalinism was attractive because from the Arab perspective, Stalin took a backward, agrarian system, and rapidly transformed it into a modern, centrally planned state that seemed to be able to compete with the West.
    - The myth of Arab nationalism perished in the War of 1967. The Israeli pre-emptive air strikes and 6-day rout of Arab armies signified the most devastating defeat that had ever been dealt to a modern Arab State. In a nutshell, Egypt lost the Sinai, Syria lost the Golan Heights, the Jordanians lost the West Bank, and Israel secured Jerusalem.
    - The disciples of Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood, previously arrested and tortured by the Egyptian government, now wore their religion proudly. It was as if they were saying: "you are praying in the direction of Karl Marx and not in the direction of Mecca, therefore you lost!" Islamic fundamentalism thus took on the role of the protector of Islam. As the Arab governments began a morbid decline, their collapse fueled a resurgence of Islam.
    - The first Salafi or Takfiri units in Egypt were created in this confrontation between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood. The brotherhood took Qutb's arguments to their *extremis*, declared society as corrupt and withdrew from it, just like the prophet had pulled out of Mecca to go to Medina. President Sadat became a casualty of this confrontation when he was assassinated.

- **Saudi Arabia and Oil:**
    - Saudi Arabia came into being in the 18th century as a marriage of convenience between Wahhabism, a sectarian, literalist, non-mystical expression of Islam, and the indigenous Saudi tribe.
    - Crucial Saudi distinctives: (1) Saudi Arabia is the only Middle Eastern country that was not occupied by European colonialism nor was it born out of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the wake of the world wars of the 20th century; (2) it is a state that was born with religion at its core (the only other example of this kind of Islam is the

Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan); (3) Saudi Arabia would not have existed had it not been for support from the United States.

- In the 1960s and 70s, nationalism in Saudi Arabia was synonymous with Islam and meant promoting Islam and advocating Islamic causes, in the same way that advocating Arab nationalism was key for Nasser. Saudi Arabian Arabs preferred to think of themselves as "Muslims" rather than "Arabs."
- The Saudi monarch, King Faysal, was the anti-Nasser of the 1960s; he made Islam part of the Saudi identity and claimed the title of the genuine "believer king."
- The 1973 Yom Kippur war was a major regional turning point. Once the war broke out, the Saudis led an Arab oil boycott against the West, and this helped King Faysal gain leverage vis-à-vis the other Arabs. While the Saudis did not send a single soldier to the fight, they seemed more powerful globally than the Arab armies that actually did the fighting. The leadership of the oil boycott made Saudi Arabia the leader of the Arab world and gave it dramatic new stature and clout. This also gave new impetus to Islam, since Saudi Arabia was not Arab nationalist, but rather a distinctly Islamic state.
- In the aftermath of the 1973 oil boycott, the royal kingdom bankrolled its influence on a global scale by placing clerics in control of funds and education and actively burnishing its image as a newly emergent Muslim state.

- **The 1979 Iranian Revolution:**
  - The Iranian Revolution is as significant for resurgent Islam as the Bolshevik Revolution was for Communism.
  - Khomeini's Islamism succeeded where Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism and Socialism failed. Khomeini carried out an anti-imperial, anti-Western revolution, and in the process converted many Marxist intellectuals and aspiring revolutionaries into Islamists.
  - The potency of the Iranian revolution and its sharp Islamic edge made it relevant in the Third World. The exportable message of the revolution was: "If you like liberation from the West, then Marxism did not do it, Arabism did not do it, and elsewhere there is nothing else that is delivering what we can offer."
  - Iran became a mentor state to revolutionary movements throughout the globe, much like the Soviets had done. Delegations of Islamists came to Iran, and the Iranians provided them with support.
  - Khomeini had much broader ambitions that just the Shia world. However, Khomeini's arguments about the supreme jurist (a role that he created for himself as the chief ayatollah and head of state) were completely unidentifiable to Sunni Islam, because Khomeini's arguments were based on Shia history and Shia jurisprudence. Sunni Islamists did not follow the Iranian model the way Khomeini wanted, but rather sought to emulate it and fit it to their own circumstances.

- **The Afghan War(s):**
  - The Soviet-backed Communist regime in Afghanistan came to power via a military coup as a last-ditch, modernizing, hyper-secular attempt complete with land reform, modernization, and the emancipation of women. The Soviet-backed regime went after the clerics, the mosques, and religious education, and infringed on tribal prerogatives

over territory and ownership of land. These actions provoked a resistance in the tribal *hinterlands* of Afghanistan—where the Communists were viewed as atheists and secularists—and helped galvanize a resistance movement in the name of Islam.

- Saudi and U.S. funds were funneled to the Mujahideen via Pakistan through Jamaat-e-Islami channels, which meant that from the very beginning, the efforts were linked to Islamists in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- Once the Soviet grip on Afghanistan began to unravel, the strategic lesson for the Muslim world was that not only can Islam bring down a state like it did in Iran in 1979, but it can also liberate itself from and defeat a global superpower.
- The United States allowed Afghanistan to be portrayed as a successful *jihad*, and not as a war that was made possible and financed and supported by the United States (and Pakistan and Saudi Arabia). The clarion call of Islam was that the "power of the word of God" brought down the Soviets.
- The Afghan war generated an unprecedented level of technological competence for the Mujahideen. Indeed, some describe it as a leap in technical skills that came from this war—the Islamist ideology became potent in a practical as well as ideological sense. It produced competence in the technologies of violence (surveillance, bomb making, propaganda) and directly helped to create the *jihadi* military culture of today.
- The net strategic effect of the Afghan war(s) was to (1) give resurgent Islam the claim that it could win a war of liberation and defeat a superpower, and (2) lay the ideological groundwork, create the human networks, and train the shock troops for resurgent Islam's next *jihad*.

Resurgent Islam's Components, Ideology, and Grand Strategies

Thus far, we have considered the impact of the historical Islamic imperative and the strategic causes of Islam's modern resurgence. Both are an essential backdrop to understanding resurgent Islam's grand strategy. This next task, however, is admittedly more difficult, because it must simultaneously take into account the macro-level similarities between different power aspirants, while also disaggregating and teasing out their differences. Said somewhat differently, while there is no "one size fits all" approach to understanding the challenges of Islamic resurgence, there definitely seems to be a common theme. The most obvious common thread is that all aspirants are vying for the same global audience. Whether Al Qaida's Osama bin Laden or Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Saudia Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the focus of their campaigns is to gain the global approbation of Muslims and to assume the mantle of Islam. In other words, they are competing for control and mastery of Islam's grand narrative. There are clear differences in their approaches. While the Al Qaida movement continues to threaten the United States using strategic terrorism and propaganda as its primary weapons, Iran is engaged in the more classic actions of an aspirant power state, and Saudi Arabia hedges and balances its "strategic" alliance with the United States with an ongoing effort to bolster its Islamic status as the custodian of the two holy places. The major players in the strategic global competition to determine "who speaks for Islam" seem to be Saudi Arabia and Iran, as the Sunni and Shiite anchor states, respectively, as well as the Islamist/Al Qaida movement. Both the aggregating as well as the competitive aspects of Islam's resurgence exemplified by all of these actors are factors in the overall milieu of Islam today—they must both be incorporated into decisions regarding national security strategy.

The Aggregating Aspects of Islamist Ideology. There are several thematic elements that have an aggregating effect for Islam's modern resurgence—they help in shaping a global audience for the power aspirants mentioned above. They are macro-ideological and rise above the schisms and sectarianism that plague Islam at the regional and local levels. They derive, in part, from Islam's historical imperatives as well as from Islam's conflicted modern history. These factors need not induce active participation from a global audience, but have an

underlying resonance with a broad and at least passively supportive audience.   As Hrair

Dekmejian describes it, "...the powerful current toward the Islamic ethos does not

automatically denote mass political activism. It is rather a politically passive fundamentalism"

or the "amorphous sociospiritual effervescence of Islam" which can include, to varying degrees,

regular mosque attendance, stricter observance of the Five Pillars, striving for an exemplary life,

regular religious meditation, participation in religious group activities, participating in

neighborhood self-help and mutual assistance, growing full beards, and wearing distinctive

clothing.[122]

In response, the collective West seems to have adopted the notion that democracy can

ameliorate the stressed relationship between the so-called Muslim world and the West.

Muslims do not seem to *sui generis* reject the concept of democracy. Whether or not the

Western form of liberal democracy is compatible with Islam can be endlessly debated, but if

one scratches the surface of Islam, it is not difficult to discover what the real irritant is. It

probably offends Western Enlightenment sensibilities that it actually is secularism that evokes

an aggregating and negative response from resurgent Islam.   As Oliver Roy has poignantly

written, this is less a conflict between "Western" and "Muslim" values, but rather a schism

between religious and non-religious people.[123] An example can be seen in a recent poll taken

among Arabs and Westerners: 86 percent of Westerners *and* 87 percent of Arabs supported

democratic values—but in divorce (60 and 35 percent), abortion (48 and 25 percent), and

homosexuality (53 and 12 percent) the fault lines become clear.[124] The prolific Fouad Ajami

wrote that modern secularism

> puts religion in an unfavorable light; religion becomes an obstacle to social change. The
> bias of secular ideologies is that people must discard their religious faith if they are to
> make progress. This is not an analytical judgment on the part of secular ideologists, but,
> paradoxically, an article of faith that is adhered to with the same intensity with which
> religious beliefs are said to be held. In the imagery and folklore of secular ideology,
> religious individuals are caricatures: men obsessed with other-worldly concerns,

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[122] Dekmejian, op cit, 51.
[123] Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 336.
[124] Ibid.

surrendering to divine will, immune to science, exploited by a religious hierarchy, willing to forgo struggle for this world in order to gain the other.[125]

Anna Simons puts it more bluntly when she writes that "what Muslims fear from Westernization is not conversion but the diminishment of Islam. Islamists do not want to see Islam treated by Muslims as Christians treat Christianity. They worry that young Arabs will adopt the typical Western attitude to religion."[126] As others have observed, resurgent Islam actively works to dehumanize the most obvious components of Western-driven globalization, which is seen as a homogenizing, secularizing, identity-destroying phenomenon—it is Western pop culture, global capitalism, and U.S. foreign policy, big cities, and sexual license that are the subject of global Islamic condemnations.[127]

Resurgent Islam's rejection of globalism finds resonance in earlier rejections of imperialism. There is a parallel structure in resurgent Islam to the language of the nativist Muslim thinkers of the 19th and early 20th century, who sought to reassert Islam in the face of European colonialism. Today's anti-globalization argument is the nativist's anti-Colonialism argument in redux. It is a new version of a familiar refrain that pitted so-called Westernizers (who see local traditions as an impediment to modernization) against nativists who pursued some form of a "dream of going back to the purity of an imagined past: Japan under the divine emperor, the Caliphate united under Islam, China as a community of peasants."[128] According to Anna Simons, a Harvard-educated anthropologist, "Islam generates bountiful nativism. The call to purify the religion and expunge corrupting influences, as well as a demand for obeisance or, at the very least, respect from infidels, is built-in. It has been since the 7th century."[129]

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), one of the first well-known nativists and an Iranian by birth, lived as a roving ambassador of Islamic universalism. He virulently opposed Western colonial imperialism and sought to invoke the idea of Islam as a civilization. He was one of the first modern Islamic "aggregators" who actually argued that "the early philosophic spirit of

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[125] Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 60.
[126] Simons, "Culture and the Practice of Deception," 52.
[127] Buruma and Margalit, op. cit., 4.
[128] Ibid., 39.
[129] Anna Simons, "Making Enemies: An Anthropology of Islamist Terror, Part II," in *The American Interest*, September/October 2006, 39.

Islam had been abandoned over the centuries as the moral principles of the religion became codified as rigidly dogmatic jurisprudence."[130] His goal was somewhat progressive in that he sought to "reform Islamic thought and scholarship so as to re-infuse it with what he saw as an original spirit of philosophical inquiry."[131] His strategy was to mobilize the brightest Muslim scholars of his day around a vision of "Islamic emancipation" from both foreign rule *and* internal religious stagnation.[132] Al-Afghani can rightly be considered one of the first modern pan-Islamists, in that he considered pan-Islamism (and nationalism) as a foil against the colonialism of his times.

Muhammad Abduh (1845-1905) was another nativist, an Eygptian-born thinker who trained in the orthodox tradition at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. A collaborator with Al-Afghani, Abduh is commonly understood to be the founder of the modern Salafiyya movement. His conception of the modernist pan-Islamic movement incorporated progressive themes, such as the universal education of all Egyptians, regardless of gender.[133] He understood this to be important because of his concern that Egypt (and Islam) had to remain abreast of global modernization. The Salafiyya model provided a way to make the Qur'an "relevant to contemporary social challenges through creative and judicious exercise of reason and human ingenuity."[134] Rashid Rida (1865-1935), who was Abduh's pupil, took the nativist's argument a step further. While he believed that the modes of interpreting the Qur'an and the *sharia* needed to be modernized, he also bemoaned the fact that the Muslim communities of his time were backward and unresponsive to the challenges of modernity. His magnum opus commentary on the Qur'an, entitled *Tafsir al-Manar* (The Interpretation of the Lighthouse), infused the original nativist impulse with a new militarism: "The Qur'an is our saber, and martyrdom is our desire. Islam is faith and cult, religion and state, book and sword. As a universal religion, Islam is a religion good for any people and in any time of human history."[135] Rida founded the influential journal *Al-Manar* in 1897, with which he was instrumental in

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[130] Mandaville, op. cit., 45.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 46.
[134] Ibid., 47.
[135] Samir, op. cit., 84-85.

spreading the ideas and writings of the 14th century Islamist Ibn Taymiyyah throughout the

Magreb as well as the Middle East, contributing to the rise of Islamic nationalist movements.[136]

It was one of Rida's disciples, Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949) who had a profound impact

on the landscape of resurgent Islam in that he founded the know well-known *al-Ikhwan al-*

Muslimun, otherwise known as the Muslim Brotherhood, which gave birth to many of the

modern Islamists movements, and whose motto remains "Islam is the solution."[137] Al-Banna

also mentored his most famous disciple, Sayyid Qutb. Qutb is monumental to Islamic

resurgence because he re-introduced the concept of *jahiliyyah* as an aggregating mechanism

and an ideological device that allowed him to draw a dividing line between the Muslim world

and everyone else. Qutb's experience was colored by a stay in the United States—while he

visited various cities, including New York and Washington D.C., he spent the most of his time at

the University of Northern Colorado accomplishing graduate work. It was during his tenure in

Colorado that he formed his opinion of the West as "a gigantic brothel, steeped in animal lust,

greed, and selfishness."[138] Juxtaposed against his conception of the pure Islamic community,

"Qutb was particularly distressed by the 'seductive atmosphere,' the shocking sensuality of

daily life, and the immodest behavior of American women…"[139] Dekmejian summarizes Qutb's

ideological formulations as follows:

- The dominant sociopolitical system of the contemporary Islamic and non-Islamic world is that of *al-jahiliyyah*—a condition of sinfulness, injustice, suffering, and ignorance of Islam's divine guidance.
- The duty of the faithful Muslim is to revive Islam in order to transform the *jahili* society through proselytization (*da'wah*) and militant jihad.
- The transformation of *jahili* society into a genuinely Islamic polity is the task of a dedicated "vanguard" (*tali'ah*) of Muslims
- The ultimate aim of committed Muslims should be the establishment of *al-Hakimiyyah*—the reign of Allah's sovereignty on earth to end all sin, suffering, and repression.[140]

The doctrine of *jahiliyya* finds resonance within Islamic resurgence because it appeals to purity,

righteousness, and the divine inspiration of Islam vis-à-vis what many Muslim's perceive as the

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[136] Dekmejian, op. cit., 40.
[137] Samir, op. cit., 85.
[138] Buruma and Margalit, op. cit., 119.
[139] Ibid., 32.
[140] Dekmejian, op. cit., 85.

corruption of a secular world. While most Muslims may not follow through on Qutb's call to action (including the overthrow of corrupt Muslim governments), the concept of *jahiliyya* is an aggregating mechanism—it is a language that most Muslims can understand. At its core, *jahiliyya* depicts Western civilization "as a form of idolatrous barbarism" and since idolatry is the worst religious sin, "it must therefore be countered with all the force and sanctions at the true believers disposal." As some scholars have noted, the use of *jahiliyya* and idolatry is a lethal innovation, because it can simultaneously accuse corrupt Muslim governments while also dehumanize the "other" and fuel a Manichaeism against the "other."[141] In his own mind, Qutb imagined the continuous war between Islam and the West as a Manichean struggle. As Qutb characterized it:

> The great worldwide clash, then was between the culture of Islam, in the service of God, and the culture of *jahiliyya*, in the service of bodily needs that degrade human beings to the level of beasts. All that is valued in *jahiliyya* culture is food, drink, sex, and creature comforts, things fit for animals. Indeed, *jahiliyya* is the culture of animals—sophisticated animals, but still animals.[142]

Nasser's secularly-oriented, pan-Arabist Egyptian government clearly saw the threat posed to its own existence by the ideology and doctrines of Sayyid Qutb, and ultimately executed him by hanging in 1966. Interestingly enough, Qutb's concept of *jahiliyya* was picked up by an Iranian thinker and activist named Sayyid Muhamud Taleqani (1910-1979), who had a significant influence shaping the ideology of the 1979 Iranian revolution. In his reading of the Qur'an, he compared the "infidel materialists" of the 20th century (i.e. the West and the United States) with the pre-Islamic barbarian version of *yahiliyya*, and "blamed the Jews and the Christians for succumbing to the new idolatry by identifying the economic interests of colonialism with their own."[143] Ali Shariati (1933-1977), a compatriot layman of Taleqani, also saw fit to develop a cultural identity around religion, and though his ideas were infused with Marxist thoughts, he saw religion as the potentially liberating force. Shariati understood that tactically, the Iranian population could be brought along to support the Iranian revolution "only with the help of an

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[141] Buruma and Margalit, op. cit., 102-106.

[142] Ibid., 120.

[143] Ibid., 115-116.

ideology that they revered—that is, by religion."[144] As Giles Kepel explains, Shariati

appropriated the ideas of leftist intellectuals and Third World revolutionaries and converted

them to themes that Shiite militants could understand. "When he translated Frantz Fanon's

The Wretched of the Earth into Persian, Shariati rendered the difference between 'oppressors'

and 'oppressed' with the Koranic terms *mustakbireen* (the arrogant) and *mustadafeen* (the

weakened or disinherited), thus transposing the theory of class struggle into the terminology of

Islam and giving it a central importance that it did not have in traditional doctrine."[145]

Khomeini subsequently interwove most of Shariati's ideas into his own religious scholarship,

further putting a distinctive Islamic spin on traditional Marxist revolutionary ideology. Shariati

had a major impact on Khomeini's thinking—his leftist influence is measurable.

In summary, there seems to be a macro-ideological component that helps to fuel the

broader outlines of the modern Islamic resurgence, partly as a result of Islam's historical

imperatives, partly in response to Colonialism, imperialism, and modernization, and partly due

to the pervasive secular vector of globalization. This macro-level component is understood by

and resonates with Muslims writ large, without reference to sects or schisms. In the past, it

was tapped into by the likes of Al-Afghani, Abduh, Rida, Qutb, among many others, regardless

of what Muslim tradition (Sunni, Shia, or Sufi) or what country (Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, etc) that

they come from. They tended to see the West in the same terms—as a challenge to the original

intent of the prophet and the timelessness of the Qur'an, as a source of *jahiliyya* or corruption

vis-à-vis the purity of Islam, and as an existential challenge to the "rightly guided way." Today,

it is part of the fabric of universal Islam, regardless of which power broker taps into it. Osama

bin Laden, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and King Abdullah, et al take advantage of this common

understanding. The hue and shade may vary from power broker to power broker, but they are

all painting from the same color palette, one that is familiar across the so-called Islamic world.

These are the aggregating factors of the grand narrative.

However, the overall context among the power aspirants is not one of cooperation, but

rather one of competition. While the competitors share the macro-ideology of Islamic

resurgence, their strategies differ greatly. As mentioned previously, and as the 1400-year

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[144] Ibid., 110-111.
[145] Kepel, op. cit., 39.

history of Islam makes abundantly clear, the competition for the mantle of Islam—the grand narrative—has been and continues to be ubiquitous. In the following section, this paper will explore the respective strategies of the chief aspirants: the Al Qaida/Islamist movement, Saudi Arabia (the Sunni anchor state), and Iran (the Shia anchor state).

The Al Qaida Strategy and Doctrine. Al Qaida is at its core a revolutionary movement that views itself as being engaged in a millennial struggle with the secular West. As Jarret Brachman has written, for Al Qaida, "Islam has been perpetually under attack, beginning with the time of the prophet, through the invasion of the Mongol hordes, Christian forces in the Crusades, European colonizers, the penetration of communist, socialist, and Marxist thought into the Middle East, the establishment of a Jewish state in the form of Israel, to the globalization of Western market capitalism."[146] In short, Al Qaida's revolutionaries believe in the concept of the "forever war" or the "perpetual war."

Al Qaida's Islamist revolutionaries have not hijacked their religion and they are not its nominal followers—instead, they should correctly be seen as Islamic "purists" who passionately follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed. They hold that Mohammed inaugurated their revolution fourteen hundred years ago. Indeed, as Anna Simons has written, Islam does not just contain within itself a revolutionary impulse, but it also formats how it is to be accomplished—through the example of the life of the prophet. According to Simons, "This is one reason why Sayyid Qutb should hardly be considered the 'father' of 'radical Islam,' although that is how he is being described today. Instead, it is Muhammad who is the real father of radical Islam."[147] It is Mohammed whom they imitate when they engage in what they consider a foreordained struggle against unbelievers, when they decapitate infidels, and when they call upon every Muslim to personally and individually engage in the struggle that they call *jihad*. It is Mohammed's vision they endorse as they seek to restore the preeminence of Islam—to purge the Muslim world of corrupt and apostate rulers, and to bring the entire world under the Islamic rightly-guided way of life. They see this as a mandatory obligation that can only cease once the goal has been accomplished: "that being the complete control of the

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[146] Jarret Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2009), 49.
[147] Anna Simons, "Culture and the Practice of Deception," 17.

whole earth such that not a single hand-span is left which is not under Islamic rule or by struggling one's utmost to accomplish this."[148]

Their ideology calls for a complete rejection of the status quo. They are fueled by a utopian vision of a worldwide sacred geography, called the Islamic caliphate—a historical fusion of politics and religion, as conceived by the prophet and his original companions. As a result, they are engaged in a tectonic struggle to refashion the world, and are likely to seek every means available—including mass genocide—to fulfill their fantasy. They view themselves as the lead agents of revolutionary change and the vanguard of a religious revival. The empathy that prevails throughout the worldwide Islamic community ensures that they have a sympathetic audience that is at least passively supportive. The broader atmosphere of Islamic resurgence has a tendency to produce hospitable environments for the revolutionaries. Much like Mao's fish swimming in a sea, a relatively small cadre of revolutionaries can hide amongst and be sustained by the larger culture of Islam.

At times, and for mutual conveniences, Al Qaida's revolutionaries draw both tacit and illicit support from regimes and governments that share their passion to humble the secular West. They increasingly wield a diverse arsenal of weapons and are skilled not only in killing and destruction, but also in political propaganda and religious manipulation. They are driven by historical imperatives and the metaphysical doctrines of Islam—which offer them an afterlife in exchange for martyrdom. In life, they gain great approbation as religious warriors in the cause of Allah—in death, they gain paradise.

Al Qaida's *Core Strategy*. The Islamist's strategy has gained a great deal of sophistication since its heady beginnings fighting the Soviets in the *hinterlands* of Afghanistan. At its core, it remains connected to its Afghan beginnings in that Al Qaida's strategy still finds its greatest resonance as an Islamic liberation ideology—in this case oriented against the West. It is primarily focused on the physical presence of Western militaries within the traditional countries of Islam, but also finds fertile ground in its fight against the pervasive influences of Western secular globalism (as discussed previously in this paper).

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[148] Ibid., 51.

In his book *Global Jihadism*, Jarret Brachman proposes 7 interlocking elements that form the basis for Al Qaida's Islamist strategy.[149] In essence, these are the building blocks of Al Qaida's global revolutionary strategy. Their basic foundation is the meta-narrative—the founding myth which encompasses the story of the Prophet Muhammad and his "rightly guided followers." This narrative also incorporates the backbone of Al Qaida's message—namely that there is a global conspiracy working to destroy Islam. This victimization myth is played up alongside the founding myth in order to bring converts and compel action. Immediately overlaying this meta-narrative is a cluster of key doctrines of Islamic metaphysics:[150]

Tawhid:

The doctrine of divine unity of Allah as revealed by the prophet.

Al-Wala wal-Bara:

The doctrine of "loyalty and disavowal": (1) Muslims must have unquestioning loyalty towards God, and (2) Muslims must to disavow all that contradicts *sharia* (especially polytheism, democracy, and those who advance such ideologies).

Jihad:

The doctrine of the struggle for Allah, primarily as espoused by Mohammad Faraj in *The Neglected Duty* (i.e. as an external military struggle in defense of the *ummah*, or community of believers).

Aqidah:

The doctrine that calls for the perfecting of the Islamic creed by rejecting all ignorance (*jahiliyya*) and deviance (*shirk*) and embracing the Qur'an (the word of Allah) and the *tawhid* (the unity of Allah).

Takfir:

The doctrine of declaring an individual a religious apostate (thereby condemning him to death) as postulated by ibn Taymiyyah, ibn Wahhab, al-Banna, Qutb, al-Usaybi, and others.

There are 5 additional and interrelated guidelines that help to define and focus Al Qaida's core strategy. While the 2 foundational elements listed above (the meta-narrative and the metaphysics) are permanent and unchangeable, the next 5 elements are adaptive feedback loops. The five elements are: (1) *political strategy*—the lessons learned from leaders in the field who are trying to apply the doctrines and teachings listed above; (2) *ideological*

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[149] Brachman chooses to call the phenomenon "global jihadism"
[150] Ibid., 41.

guidance—ongoing ideological heft as provided by Al Qaida's loose collection of Islamic scholars and what Brachman innovatively calls "jihobiists"—those who use modern enabling technology (such as the internet) to "dabble and play" in the realm of *jihadist* strategy (3) *military strategy*—what Brachtman calls the "hard-nosed strategic thinking" provided by men like Abu Musab al-Suri, (4) *technical contributions*—the expanding multi-media propaganda campaign that takes advantage of internet and other modern media, and (5) *Islamic engagement*—grass roots level recruitment of Muslims through engagement in study groups, online self-guided curricula, and so forth.

According to Brachman, this core strategy has proven to be enduring for several reasons: first, the ideology provides a universal rallying cry that resonates locally, but applies globally; second, Al Qaida's operatives are continually empowering one another with the new skills and knowledge that they need to counter the security efforts that are being launched against them; and third, the United States' invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq has provided both a fertile recruitment narrative (i.e. Islam is under assault from the West) as well as a proving-ground for the perfection of tactical combat operations. [151] Additionally, Al Qaida's unexpected pragmatism and adaptability have surprised some observers. Al Qaida revolutionaries have demonstrated an amazing *realpolitik* as they continue to pursue their core objectives, and at times have even been willing to sacrifice religious principles in order to pursue their stated goals. One obvious example is the pre-attack behavior of many of the 9/11 hijackers, who frequented Western bars and brothels in order to blend in while they prepared for their martyrdom operations. This apparent pragmatism is tactically useful as they continue to try to infiltrate Western countries and mount further attacks.

It may seem tiresome to Western strategists to have to deal with a doctrine with metaphysics components, but an understanding of how Al Qaida operates requires exactly that—an understanding of basic metaphysics and the Islamic narrative. In the words of Hrair Dekmejian, this is a "chiliastic[152] ideology containing a salvational prescription of primordial values, beliefs, and practices" and these ideas are used to generate action amongst the

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[151] Brachman, op. cit., 10.
[152] Chiliasm is a metaphysical belief similar to millenarianism. It seeks to advance a future ideal society brought about by revolutionary action.

movement's followers.[153] This is not the world of the empirical, but the world of religious

doctrine and belief, and it is the basic mechanism that empowers Al Qaida to hold sway over its

followers. Al Qaida's front line soldiers tend to be disconnected or nomadic individuals whose

political identities and aspirations are not necessarily tied to the citizenships that they happen

to hold. "Unlike groups…such as Hamas and Hizbollah (whose goals are primarily if not

exclusively national in orientation), for these new militants, the terrain of jihad is truly global in

scope…"[154] Oliver Roy describes them as "deterritorialized" individuals who "fight at the

frontier to protect a center where they have no place."[155] Furthermore, as Roy accurately

points out, their motivation to join the cause is not necessarily driven by poverty—rather,

"what is at stake is more the reconstruction or recasting of a lost identity than the expression of

a depressed social or economic situation."[156] Peter Mandaville uses the term

"micromobilization," and describes how Al Qaida aspirants concentrate in micro cells of like-

minded individuals that generate human solidarity.[157] Undergirded by Al Qaida's meta-

narratives and empowered with actionable doctrine, they become independent and self-

generating tactical units. The internet helps to connect these micro units to the larger

community, creating an electronic or e-tribe, as it where. The e-tribe provides numerous

benefits, including access to online libraries, doctrinal resources, self-help information for

military tactics and weapons employment, targeting research, as well as basic logistical support

for travel and finances.

Just like the original community of believers perpetuated by the prophet Mohammad,

the tribal nature of the phenomenon also drives the type of military tactics that are possible.

Mohammad was a skirmisher and raider—his *razzias* set a pattern for how today's

revolutionaries fight. As David Ronfeldt has written, "classic tribal warfare emphasizes raids,

ambushes, and skirmishes—attacks followed by withdrawals, without holding ground. Pitched

battles are not the norm, for tribes lack the organizational and logistical capacities for

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[153] Dekmejian, op. cit., 8.
[154] Mandaville, op. cit., 238.
[155] Roy, op. cit., 287-288.
[156] Ibid., 315.
[157] Mandaville, op. cit., 271.

campaigns and sieges."[158] Instead of pitched battles, Al Qaida's revolutionaries aim for attention grabbing sensational events. This is what some have termed a "hit and shape" model.

The Integrated "Hit and Shape" Model. Al Qaida's revolutionaries have reaped great dividends from the "hit and shape" strategy model. Under this construct, Al Qaida plans a sensational attack (along the lines of 9/11), then fades into the background in order to observe public reaction and engage in carefully scripted and planned media campaigns. This sophisticated approach is traditional known as the "propaganda of the deed." Typically a strategy in guerilla operations and other revolutionary campaigns, Rupert Smith explains that the objective is to "force government, people, and external agencies to pay attention, to make the 'cause' significant, to act or demonstrate against that which is unpopular, to gain recruits, and to gain at least the population's tacit support for the 'cause.'"[159] Essentially, this is a sophisticated integrated military and propaganda campaign that is focused on provoking an excessive governmental response. As Smith writes, the concept is to "use the strength and weight of the counter-revolutionary forces to advantage, rather as a judo fighter seeks to use the energy of an opponent's attack to throw him on the ground. Attacks, or 'incidents,' are carried out such as to invite, or possibly demand, response from the government."[160] Brachman poignantly writes that Al Qaida intended to "use the fear they generate to bait Western military forces into the Middle East, drive Western business and investment out of the Middle East, and therefore bleed Western economies dry by forcing them to defend themselves against the threat of future terrorism."[161]

While this integrated "hit and shape" strategy model is sophisticated in its own right, Thomas Hegghammer and Byrnjar Lia argue that Al Qaida's revolutionaries have evolved to even higher levels of strategic art and planning, including a category of thinking that they label as "*Jihadi* Strategic Studies." There is a genre of Al Qaida revolutionaries who tend to write under pen names to keep their true identities secret. What is both unique and noteworthy

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[158] David Ronfeldt, "Al-Qaeda and its affiliates: a global tribe waging segmental warfare," in *Information Strategy and Warfare: A guide to theory and practice*, ed. John Arquilla and Douglas Borer (New York: Routledge, 2007), 40.
[159] Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 169.
[160] Ibid., 169.
[161] Brachman, op. cit., 188.

about them is their pragmatism. Although each of them is a true believer, according to Brachman, "none seems to allow his religious or ideological beliefs to hamstring his military thinking. Winning comes first, so ideology can flex to the needs of the situation on the ground."[162] Brachman claims that their flexibility and their willingness to use all technological means to spread their strategy make them particularly effective at viral propagation.

Jihadi Strategic Studies. The "who's who" list of Al Qaida's new generation of strategic thinkers includes Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, Abu Yahya, Abu Bakr Najk, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, though none of these men reach the level of sophistication of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri.

Qurashi's writings display a nuanced understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Al Qaida movement. While he concedes that the movement is vastly outmatched, out gunned, and overpowered in terms of combat power, he argues that Al Qaida's scarce resources have made it more flexible, creative, and resilient, and that being the "underdog" usually makes for good propaganda opportunities.[163] Qurashi refers to Sun Tzu in order to address the power asymmetry: (1) "The best war is turning the tables on enemy plans after they have been worked out; (2) "If your enemy is superior in number and military hardware, make good use of terrain by spreading out on rugged mountains and lanes"; and (3) "Force the enemy, who is superior in number, to deploy his army in a certain way that suits you best and make your army ready to face all forms of reorganization."[164] Furthermore, Qurashi directly addresses how to defeat U.S. information strategy campaigns. He "contends that the movement must counter U.S. propaganda efforts by using scientific principles, including (1) identifying American information strategy, (2) pointing out contradictions, (3) strongly attacking the weak points in U.S. propaganda, (4) ignoring U.S. propaganda when it is accurate and convincing, and (5) taking the initiative in information operations against the U.S."[165]

According to Brachman, Abu Yahya is a senior member of Al Qaida and one of the world's foremost experts on the strengths and vulnerabilities of the movement. The fact that he openly discusses Al Qaida's vulnerabilities not only reveals a more sophisticated level of

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[162] Ibid., 82-83.
[163] Ibid., 84-85.
[164] Ibid, 86.
[165] Ibid., 89.

thought, but also points toward a long-term confidence in the sustainability of the movement.

He even offers the following recommendations for the U.S. to improve its counter-ideology

campaign:

- Focus on amplifying those ex-Jihadists who have willingly renounced the use of armed action and recanted their previously held ideological commitments
- Fabricate stories about Jihadist mistakes and exaggerate real Jihaddist mistakes whenever they are made (e.g. convince the population that the murder of innocent people is a central part of global Jihadism)
- Encourage mainstream Muslim clerics to issue *fatwas* that denounce the Jihadist movement
- Strengthen and back Islamic movements far removed from Jihad, particularly those which favor a democratic approach
- Aggressively neutralize or discredit the guiding lights of the Jihadist movement
- Spin the minor disagreements among leaders as being major doctrinal and methodological disputes, and focus targeted information operations on areas where known fissures can be exploited.[166]

Abu Bakr Najk wisely recommends using propaganda to target American social

cohesion. "For Najk, all the military power in the world is worthless without the cohesion of

society and its institutions."[167] On the other hand, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the Egyptian who

traditionally is seen to be Al Qaida's second in command, focuses on the long-term viability of

the organization. True reform, according to Zawahiri, "begins by planting the will of resistance

in [Muslim] hearts and the hearts of [their] children and coming generations."[168] Zawahiri

divides his approach into two parts. "The first half consists of grassroots actions in order to

change corrupt and corruptive regimes," [presumably within the Muslim world]; "the second

half of Zawahiri's long-term plan is to transform al-Qaida from a vanguard elite to truly a

popular movement that could rapidly deploy Muslim men to such fields of conflict as

Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia."[169]

While this abbreviated summary of Al Qaida strategic studies reveals serious and

thoughtful analysis by several of the organizations leading thinkers, the *eminence grise* of Al

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[166] Ibid., 90-92. To Westerners, it may seem unwise of Yahya to offer free advice to the enemy. However, this type of propaganda may reveal the certitude of Al Qaida's strategists, who view their long-term chances of success as very high, given the fact that they are pursuing the will of Allah.

[167] Ibid., 87-88.

[168] Ibid., 102.

[169] Ibid., 103.

Qaida strategic thought is undoubtedly Abu Mus'ab al-Suri. Thanks to Brynjar Lia, a historian

and research professor at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), we now have a

more detailed understanding of Al Suri and his writings. Lia's book entitled *Architect of Global*

Jihad: The Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, not only contains a detailed

biographical account of Al Suri's life, but also incorporates a translation of key chapters of Al

Suri's magnum opus entitled *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*. Al Suri's writings are

groundbreaking because he went about his analysis in a deliberate and scientific fashion.

According to Lia,

> Al-Suri used his training as an historian to collect, record, summarize and analyze his
> jihadi experiences. In doing so, he discarded traditional jihadi rhetoric about God's
> promised victory in favor of brutal honesty, putting hard-nosed realism before religious
> wish-fulfillment and pragmatic long-term strategies before utopianism. By subjecting
> the objects of his study to secular academic scrutiny and by integrating Western
> literature on guerilla warfare, international security and power politics, al-Suri evolved
> fascinating doctrines about decentralized jihadi warfare in the post-9/11 security
> environment. He has also provided a strategic rationale for the use of weapons of mass
> destruction by al-Qaida against the West.[170]

Al Suri's *Global Resistance Call* was published online in January 2005 and immediately gained

widespread publicity. The wide appeal of his writings is a testament to his clarity and precise

writing. According to Lia, one of the sub-chapters of the book on training doctrines has been

reformatted and distributed as a short 12-page manual entitled *Modern Methods in Military*

Training.[171] Numerous Western media outlets reported that Al Suri was arrested in Quetta,

Pakistan in late October or early November 2005. His whereabouts are presently unknown.

What follows is a paraphrased summary of Al Suri's writing, as excerpted from Chapter Eight of

Al Suri's Book (entitled "The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call") as depicted

in Brynjar Lia's book *Architect of Global Jihad*.

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[170] Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 4.
[171] Ibid., 24.

Al Suri's Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call. [172] According to Al Suri, there are 3 types of *jihad*. The first is "the school of secret military organizations," which has the goal of toppling existing governments and establishing an Islamic state. The second is entitled "the school of open fronts and overt confrontations," which is used to confront the enemy from permanent bases and with semi-regular guerilla warfare (as in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya). The third type of *jihad* is the "school of individual *jihad* and small cell terrorism," the kind of single operations that are carried out by individuals or small groups. Al Suri implies that regional and tactical circumstances will drive what type of *jihad* to wage, but in general, he seems to prefer the third school because of its demonstrated success in "making the enemy tremble," its security success (because small cells can operate in secrecy), and its agitation success (in mobilizing what he calls the "Islamic Nation"). Al Suri is more reticent about the second school (the school of open fronts and overt confrontations) because of what happened in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11. According to Al Suri, "if we did not take a warning from these [events], we can blame nobody but ourselves when 80% of our forces were eliminated in the repercussions of September 11th during two years only!" In this regard, he calls on Al Qaida to end its "Tora Bora-mentality."

Overall, Al Suri argues for the necessity of planting the seeds of "globalizing jihad" throughout the world—he believes that this is axiomatic. He argues forcefully that the idea of belonging to the Islamic Nation is vital for *jihad*. In this regard, he is pleased that the United States "globalized our cause by its attack on us." He asserts that this helps to convert those who are uncommitted. He argues that the successful propagation of *jihad* requires this universal affiliation, and that this affiliation engenders an important military commitment, which is vital to the military theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call. Strategically speaking, the Global Islamic Resistance cannot succeed if one takes away this universal (*umami*) dimension.

Al Suri proposes that confronting American and allied forces in an overt way is not advisable. He speaks of the unimaginable technological superiority of the hostile forces,

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[172] The following summary is excerpted and edited from the translation of Chapter Eight of Al Suri's *The Global Islamic Resistance Call* as depicted on pp. 347-484 of Lia's book. I have chosen to edit and condense the translation in order to make it more accessible and readable.

especially in the air, and in their control over space, and of their enormous capability of taking satellite photos and directing air and missile strikes. Therefore, the basis of the resistance's military activity against America and her allies must lie within the framework of light guerilla warfare, civilian terror, and secret methods. A future alteration in the balance of power in favor of the resistance and *jihad* may again make the method of "open confrontation" actionable.   According to Al Suri, future preconditions for success in "Open Front" *Jihad* are:

- Geographical factors: spacious in terms of area, varied with long borders, difficult to besiege, with rough mountainous terrain, forests or similar, which helps in concentrating enemy troops, and sufficient food and water sources
- Population factors: the presence of a large number of inhabitants whose movements are not possible to register, the youth should be known for its military stubbornness, fighting ability, and persistence, and there should be sources of weapons
- Political factors: the presence of a cause in which the local habitants can believe in, i.e. something to mobilize the Islamic nation. This is called a positive '*jihadi* climate.' (Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia are good examples).

Al Suri comments that the most suitable regions for confrontation on "Open Fronts" are Afghanistan, the countries in Central Asia, Yemen and the Arab Peninsula, Morocco and North Africa, the Levant and Iraq.

Next, Al Suri rejects the American definition of terrorism. Instead, he proposes two types of terrorism: blameworthy and praiseworthy terrorism. Blameworthy terrorism (*irhab madhmum*) is terrorism of falsehood (*irhab al-batil*) and force of falsehood (*quwwa al-batil*), and he defines it as every action, speech or behavior which inflicts harm and fear among the innocent without true cause (such as terrorism of thieves, highway robbers, invaders, and assailants). Its perpetrator is a "criminal terrorist" who deserves to be punished. However, praiseworthy terrorism (*irhab mahmud*) is terrorism by the righteous that have been unjustly treated. It removes injustice from the oppressed. This is undertaken through terrorizing and repelling the oppressor. Al Suri argues that terrorizing the enemies is a religious duty, and assassinating their leaders is a prophetic tradition.

Al Suri also proposes a targeting doctrine for *jihad*. He argues that the movement should target areas (1) wherever you hurt the enemy the most and inflict upon him the heaviest losses; and (2) wherever you arouse Muslims the most and awaken the spirit of *jihad*

and resistance in them. He urges for moderation when confronting apostates. These confrontations must be made with sound arguments and explanations, from people of knowledge and people of "pen and letters," and not with weapons. In addition, he cautions about striking civilians. When striking civilians in order to deter them or for retaliation, one should avoid women and children, especially in schools and similar locations. Also, when targeting the heart of the hostile countries (America and the Western allies), one should avoid targeting places of worship for any religion or faith. One should also avoid harming civilians who are citizens of countries that have no relation with the conflict, even if they are non-Muslim. All of this must be done in order to maintain the reputation of the resistance in the different spheres of public opinion.

Next, Al Suri approaches the subject of deterrence. Interestingly, he postulates using terrorism as a deterrence tool for manipulating the enemy. Al Suri explains that the theory of terrorism is based on deterring the enemy with fear.   There are allies that fight with the United States, either out of fear for America and her allies, or out of a desire for what America will give them in return. The resistance must not neglect the importance of deterring these parties. Most of them will be deterred if one sets an example by striking or severely punishing a few of them. Al Suri argues that throughout history, "armed terrorism" has proven its usefulness as the best political method to persuade an opponent to surrender to the will of another. Referring to the Al Qaida attack on the Madrid train station on March 11, 2004, he concludes that (1) it changed public opinion in Spain and led to a victory in the elections for the Socialist Party, (2) the new Prime Minister declared the withdrawal of Spanish forces from Iraq, and (3) the entire European-American alliance was shaken. However, Al Suri cautions that a deterrence strategy that utilizes terrorism requires careful political considerations, taking into account the benefits and drawbacks, the political power balances, and also the welfare of the Muslims.

Al Suri then moves on to discuss how to establish what he calls Global Islamic Resistance Units (GIRUs). He argues that it is absolutely necessary that the resistance transform into a strategic phenomenon, after the pattern of the Palestinian intifada against the occupation forces, but on a broader scale, comprising the entire Islamic world. Al Suri seeks to devise a

fool proof strategy that the United States cannot interdict or abort. He discusses a methodology which is self-renewing and self-perpetuating even after all its details are evident to the enemy. His solution is an operational method that employs GIRUs.

A GIRU is a decentralized way of operating—GIRUs can be individuals, small cells (3-5 people), or small units (8-10 people). The glue that binds GIRUs together consists of:

1. A common name and personal oath to God
2. A common ideology and doctrine, and an oath of commitment to both
3. A common goal, which is to resist the invaders and their allies, and an oath to God on *jihad* to defeat them and to work to establish his rule.

In terms of methodology (doctrine) for GIRUs, one should begin by spreading the Resistance Call's ideology, its methods, and its operational theories and concepts. Youth must be directed to strike enemy targets, both at home and abroad. Every group must prepare individually and independently and should execute operations in accordance with what it has managed to acquire in terms of training capabilities and preparedness. For security purposes, there can be no organizational links of any kind between GIRUs, except the bonds of a common ideology. This method offers homogeneity under a common ideology, yet also provides security because of the independence of each GIRU. Al Suri calls this an "idea organization." Therefore, according to Al Suri, GIRUs are organizations which are directed by the idea (common ideology), united by the goal and the common name, and administered in secret. Al Suri also provides a taxonomy of different types of GIRUs:

- Popular Resistance Units consist of individuals and small groups with limited opportunities with regards to financing, or the level of training. They are the overwhelming majority of Muslims.
- General Military Units consist of individuals who previously had medium-level training in using light personal weapons and explosives (e.g. mujahideen who previously participated in some way in *jihadi* operations, such as Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Kashmir, or the Philippines)
- Quality Resistance Units possess high security, organizational, military and material capabilities. They are comprised of individuals or groups that have received high-level training in the security field, in secret operational activity, civilian terrorism, and the management of cells in guerilla warfare.
- Strategic Operation Units are special units that can be formed by individuals who have (1) a strategic understanding of the nature of the struggle and its political, military, and strategic aspects; (2) very high financial capabilities; (3) very high security and organizational capabilities; (4) very high military skills; and (5)

knowledge and operational abilities in acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction, in times when there is a need for retaliation, or for the strategic settlement of the conflict with America.

It seems obvious to Al Suri that spreading "the idea" is vital to the propagation of GIRUs. Therefore, he argues that the idea (ideology) must be made available in every way, directly or through correspondence, or through communication networks, the Internet, and in written, audible, and visual formats. He calls for it to be distributed in translations in the languages of the Muslim nations, and in the main languages of the world. He also calls for Secret Agitation Units formed by very small cells of one to three persons that have religious, political, ideological and media experience, organizational awareness, and experience in using the Internet and electronic communication equipment.   The mission of these units is to spread the Global Resistance Call and redistribute its literature, its research studies, and its various programs by clandestine means, especially over the Internet. They should work on translating the works and communiqués of the Resistance to the languages of the Muslims and to the world languages.

Al Suri explains how viral propagation will further spread the ideology. It is incumbent upon those who work to create GIRUs to subject the recruits to an intensive ideological, security and military training program. Subsequently, each of the recruits should be given an assignment to build a unit, consisting of two or three elements. Al Suri seems very concerned about security. New units are to be given a date before which they cannot start operating in order to allow the "builder" to distance himself from the area of operations because he is the only vulnerability for these groups (he knows about their existence).

Finally, Al Suri addressed different kinds of training methods. He argues that the only training which remains possible (due to overwhelming American pressure and international coordination to combat terrorism) is secret training in houses and mobile training camps. Training is to be based on the following building blocks: mental and ideological preparation, the theory of *jihadi* guerilla warfare (the war of the oppressed), and ideological propagation. The overall goal of the training program is to create an ideological resistance fighter. According to Al Suri, it is not possible to gather the GIRUs into training camps, but it is possible to plant

training camps across the Islamic Nation (i.e. Muslims living throughout the world), in individual houses and quarters. The military training should consist of the following

1. Intensive physical training (wrestling, karate, judo, etc)
2. Lessons on how to disassemble and assemble revolvers and machine guns
3. Shooting with hunting weapons which use compressed air
4. A theoretical study on how to use hand grenades
5. A theoretical study on how to use explosives
6. Proficiency in using wireless communication devices
7. Theoretical studies of manuals on military and tactical subjects: light and medium weapons, science of explosive engineering, science on military topography, science of wireless communications and encoding, manuals on security and movement, manuals on the science of electricity and electronics, manuals on combat tactics, manuals on secret organizational conduct

In summary, Al Suri presents a military strategy that takes advantage of Al Qaida's strengths and minimizes its weaknesses. His analysis is logical, calculating, and strategic, and is also accompanied healthy doses of self-criticism and pragmatism. It is clear that he expects this to be a long and protracted struggle, with ebbs and flows, successes and setbacks. However, there is a sense of certitude in his writing, in that he believes that the West will ultimately loose the strategic war, mainly due to the following reasons: (1) the West does not have the moral character nor the endurance to outlast the long-term strategic attack being propagated by the Global Islamic Resistance Units; (2) the ideology of Islam is superior to that of the secular West; (3) the GIRUs are buried like moles throughout Western society; and (4) GIRUs are self-generating and self-sustaining, due to their inherent simplicity, improved security characteristics, diversity, and access to indigenous resources.

Al Suri may not be the strategic mouthpiece for Al Qaida, but he is one of its visionaries. His potent doctrine regarding Global Islamic Resistance Units, or what basically amounts to Islamist sleeper cells, is being implemented today.[173] The continued propagation of GIRUs can only occur on the back of the ideology that fuels their spread. This ideology—his "Global Islamic Resistance Call"—carries with it the imprimatur of the legacy of the prophet and Islam's

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[173] For example, one wonders if Abdulhakim Muhammad, the 23-year old Muslim convert who attacked a Little Rock recruiting center on June 1, 2009, killing one soldier and wounding another, was exposed to Al Suri's doctrine when he spent time in Yemen in 2008. For further details, see "Arkansas Shooter had Firepower, Other Targets," in *The Wall Street Journal*, 3 June 2009, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124404767284081799.html, accessed 16 June 2009.

modern resurgence. It is further encouraged by Islam's liberation theology, which remains a growth industry amongst Islamists. As other observers have noted, the liberation side of Islamism remains one of its most dynamic and vibrant elements and continues to unfold aggressively, both domestically and internationally.

Iran and Saudi Arabia: The Intertwined Strategies of Power Competitors.[174] The Persian Gulf, which separates the Arabian Peninsula from the Persian landmass to the east, is much more than a simple geographic divide between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In many ways, it represents a fundamental schism between two countries aspiring to be the dominant Islamic power state. Iran's geostrategic location weighs considerably on its national aspirations. Iranians never adopted the Arabic culture and language. Located on the eastern edge of the Middle East, Iran abuts the heartland of the Arab world, yet is also tied to the Caucasus, with deep connections to Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the Central Asian republics. Historically, this was the center of the Silk Road, which extended from Anatolia (modern day Turkey) to East Asia. This ancient *gravitas* is not lost on Iran today. In fact, as Vali Nasr argues, what we are dealing with today is a resurgence of Iranian nationalism. Iran views its Persian heritage on par with the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations, and expects to be treated as a great power state.

In more recent times, three formative events that occurred in relative close proximity to each other have shaped Iranian foreign policy and strategy: (1) 1979 Iranian Revolution, (2) the hostage crisis, and (3) the eight year Iran-Iraq war. The 1979 Iranian Revolution fundamentally changed the face of modern Islam. As previously discussed in this paper, it had the effect of "Islamizing" the rest of the so-called Islamic world and encouraged governments to become more Islamic and resistance movements to move from being leftist to being Islamic. As a result of this trend, Iran became subject to countervailing strategies from other Middle East regimes that sought to stem Khomeini's newly established influence. Like many of its Middle Eastern compatriots, Saudi Arabia developed closer ties with the United States. Other Middle East countries started to heavily invest in anti-Shiite policies and strategies in order to hedge against Iranian power as well. The Saudis worked hard at bolstering the Sunni brand name, while simultaneously expanding the sectarian rift within Islam. Just as Saudi Arabia based its strategy

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[174] The thoughts and ideas contained in this section were gleaned, in part, from lectures and discussions led by Dr. Vali Nasr at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy from January to April 2009.

vis-à-vis Nasser's secular pan-Arabism on expanding its Islamic influence, so it now worked to expand the influence of Sunni fundamentalism, especially in places like Pakistan. As the "protectorate of the two holy places," the Saudi kingdom embarked on a world-wide strategy to push Sunni fundamentalism. This placed Khomeini in a strategic bind: it would not serve his aspirations to become the voice of Islam well if he helped to promote sectarianism *within* Islam. His only counter strategy, therefore, was to promote two secular (i.e. non-sectarian) themes that normally find resonance with *all* Muslims: (1) anti-Americanism and (2) the Palestinian-Israeli problem. Thus, the mold was cast for a strategy that has endured to this day. As Iran continues to compete with Saudi Arabia for the role of Islam's power state, it has to work to diminish the "Shiite" factor, and in doing so pursues the perennial twin strategy of anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism, two themes that find empathy throughout Islam regardless of the sectarian divide.

The second formative event for Iranian foreign policy and strategy was the Iranian hostage crisis. The storming of the U.S. embassy in Tehran occurred as a sub-plot to the 1979 Iranian revolution. Experts disagree about who actually authorized the event, but regardless of its source, the hostage crisis acted as a cover for the settling of post-revolutionary factional infighting in Iran, mainly between the leftists and the Islamists. The Islamists won, and the leftists were purged in a bloody and brutal fight. As the Islamists solidified their grip, they viewed the hostage crisis as a way to viscerally demonstrate their newly acquired power on the world stage. In deliberately allowing the hostage crisis to drag on, Iran was formulating a foreign policy built on violating international law (the militant takeover of a foreign embassy and the taking of hostages obviously violated basic international law). As the hostage crisis deepened, Iran fully embraced this approach—a fundamental rejection of the basic tenets of international law and diplomacy. The hostage crisis also served to deepen anti-Americanism and ingrain it in Iran's foreign policy. Most recent revolutions have tended to be illiberal and anti-Western, and for Iran, this perspective became embedded in the self-definition of the regime and its ethos. To make matters worse, the hostage crisis gave Iran notoriety and prestige in the world press, which only served to magnify the collective effects of the situation. Finally, Iran also learned the wrong lessons from the hostage crisis, namely that there are little

to no consequences for flaunting international law. From the Iranian perspective, it gave up the hostages on its own terms and when it wanted to. This has generated a sense of brinksmanship and invincibility in its world view. Said differently, Iran learned that "the more you misbehave, the more attention and recognition you get from the international community."

The third major factor that has shaped Iran's international strategies is the 8-year Iran-Iraq war. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, the country was just emerging from the throes of a tumultuous and bloody revolution. The Shah's military was viewed by Khomeini as a republican element protecting the incumbent regime, and as a result, the revolution did not deal kindly with the Iranian military. In fact, what was left of the Iranian military was probably spared complete dismemberment because of the Iraqi invasion. Initially, the Iraqi military, which at the time was one of the most potent conventional military forces in the world, had its way with Iran. Iran was literally forced to take people out of prison and put them on the front lines. In the face of the superior Iraqi military, Iran used a form of martyrdom in order to defend the revolution and the country. In this light, the Iran-Iraq war continued to radicalize the regime and the country. Even today, Iranians refer to the war as "the sacred defense." The process of mobilizing the population for martyrdom attacks did something to the national psyche—it is estimated that over one million Iranians died in the war. It entrenched the revolution and generated a level of commitment that gave it staying power. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards were born out of the Iran-Iraq war. By the end of the war, many of Iran's conclusions about the hostage crisis were reinforced. International agreements or treaties were seen as worthless because nobody in the international community (1) enforced international boundaries and demanded an Iraqi withdrawal, and (2) no international conventions with regard to chemical weapons were enforced by the international community when Iraq launched these weapons against the Iranian "human wave" attacks. The war also hardened the Iranians and taught them how to survive indigenously, because few countries willing to sell the Iranians weaponry during the war. Instead, Iran had to build its own internal industrial capacity to do so. In the long term, this self-reliance has made Iran much more resistant to international sanctions. Notwithstanding, perhaps the most significant lesson learned by the Iranian leadership as a

result of the Iran-Iraq war was that Iran was invaded by Iraq because it did not have the most powerful weapons at its disposal—namely, nuclear weapons.

Today's Iran is a study in contradictions. As Vali Nasr has written,"the Islamic revolution is today a spent force in Iran, and the Islamic republic is a tired dictatorship facing pressures to change." And yet, he continues, in Iran today "a theocracy coexists with limited democratic practices; a secularized middle-class youth culture shares the public sphere with a sizable share of the populace that still puts its trust in Khomeini and his legacy. Daily newspapers run full-page discussions of debates between French philosophers over the meaning of 'postmodernist discourse,' yet the country continues to languish under the Islamic Republic. The pull of modernity and reformism is strong, but so is that of tradition and conservatism."[175]

Meanwhile, ever since 1991 Iran has been one of the chief beneficiaries of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East. Fortuitously for Iran, its erstwhile chief enemy committed the strategic blunder of invading Kuwait in 1990. In the first Gulf War, the United States and its coalition partners inflicted a punishing defeat on Iraq, thereby directly bolstering Iranian security. Subsequently, Iran has welcomed what some have called "the collapse of the Sunni wall around them" while simultaneously approving of the Shia revival in Iraq.[176] The U.S. assault on the Taliban in Afghanistan in late 2001 and on Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2003 met with quiet approval in Tehran. "In fact, the post 9/11 U.S.-led destruction of the Taliban and Saddam regimes has freed Iran to expand its regional influence…. In many regards, the years since 2001 have been for Iran a 'Prussian moment,' comparable to the era of growing influence for Berlin that Otto von Bismarck managed to engineer across the German-speaking world in the mid-nineteenth century."[177] In this case, it has been the United States that unwittingly opened the door for Iranian opportunism—chiefly by systematically ameliorating Iran's chief regional threats.

Meanwhile, across the Persian Gulf, the Saudi monarchy looks increasingly like a relic of a different time, trying to find its place in the 21st century. On the one hand, it continues to

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[175] Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 213.
[176] Ibid., 222.
[177] Ibid., 222.

cultivate a relationship with the United States, while on the other hand simultaneously appealing to sympathies of the Wahhabi *ulema* that grant the monarchy its legitimacy. Perpetually reminded of the embarrassing grand mosque seizure of 1979 and keenly aware of the streak of Al Qaida violence that plagued the kingdom in 2004-2005, the Saudis are forced to maintain a credible connection to Islam in order to placate the Islamists and secure their own existence. Al Qaida's existential threat to the monarchy it no longer dealt with by simply exporting the problem to Karachi or London. The Saudi internal security organizations have embarked on a moderately successful campaign to surreptitiously arrest and "deprogram" problematic clerics. For now, the trend of violent terrorist acts perpetrated by Al Qaida and its affiliates on the Arabian Peninsula has abated.

Nasr paints the competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran as a cleavage between Islamic fundamentalisms. On the one hand, Iran and Khomeini's "red" fundamentalism was and is genuinely revolutionary—it's goal to "shatter the existing state and replace it with something completely new."[178] The Saudi response was a Sunni revivalist fundamentalism—that is, the "Sunni fundamentalism in Pakistan and much of the Arab world…rooted in conservative religious impulses and the bazaars, mixing mercantile interests with religious values…to give the system a fresh, thick coat of 'Islamic green' paint."[179] The sectarian divide is not lost on observers in the region. "When King Fahd responded to Khomeini's challenge by assuming the title 'protector of the two holy sites' (*khadim al-haramayn al sharifayn*), he received the ringing endorsement of the Sunni world. A Sunni king was seen as a more suitable guardian of Mecca and Medina than a Shia ayatollah."[180] Giles Kepel offers a similar perspective when he writes that "the entire decade of the 1980s was overshadowed by a power struggle between the Saudi monarchy and Khomeini's Iran. Tehran sought to export its revolution, just as the Russians had once exported theirs. Riyadh set out to contain this ploy, just as the Americans had contained the Soviets during the Cold War."[181]

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[178] Ibid., 149.
[179] Ibid., 149.
[180] Ibid., 150.
[181] Kepel, op. cit., 7.

Today, Saudi Arabia remains a theocratic police state governed by a corrupt house of Saud. As has been well documented elsewhere, Saudi Arabia is perhaps the most egregious example of self-serving, theo-monarchical rule. The House of Saud continues to encourage worldwide propagation of Sunni Islam while simultaneously lending a façade of official support to Western attempts to fight the Al Qaida and its associated movements. As recently as 2003, the Saudi weekly *Ain al-Yaqeen* noted that $70 billion in Saudi funding has produced "some 1,500 mosques, 210 Islamic centers, 202 colleges, and nearly 2,000 schools in non-Islamic countries."[182] This was, reportedly, "'the largest worldwide propaganda campaign ever mounted'—dwarfing the Soviets' propaganda efforts at the height of the Cold War."[183] Saudi Arabia's quest to contain Iran has had numerous strategic consequences: (1) the former Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki, laid the basis for a Saudi-Pakistani relationship that underwrote the Taliban's conquest of Afghanistan; (2) ambitious ventures such as the Islamic universities in Islamabad, Pakistan, and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, were established and staffed by men who were trained in Saudi Arabia and who, still dependent on Saudi patronage, continue to entrench Wahhabi ideologies everywhere from Kano, Nigeria to Jakarta, Indonesia; (3) the same Saudi-sponsored militants that fought against foreigners in Afghanistan perpetrate acts of violence against the Shia minority in Pakistan, thus helping to destabilize the country; and (4) Wahhabi fatwas continue to declare Shiism a heresy and portray it as the "fifth column for the enemies of true Islam."[184]

In summary, it is less-than-fruitful to view the actions of Al Qaida, Iran, or Saudi Arabia in isolation. They are by no means the only strategic players in the region, but they are clearly the dominant ones. Numerous questions endure regarding the viability of the so-called "secular" Arab or African states (Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia), the measured or moderately Islamic states (Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan), and the "government as the chief Islamist" states (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Sudan). All of these countries are clearly influenced both by the aggregating effects of Islam (as discussed previously) as well as by local circumstances. In most of these states, the dominant concern is the long-term survival of the

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[182] Frank Gaffney, "Waging the War of Ideas," *Washington Times*, 9 December 2003, A19.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Nasr, op. cit., 155, 157, 167, 246.

incumbent regimes. As such, the sharper edge of the state is usually directed against the "irreconcilables." With regard to the masses, these states have incorporated and absorbed the lessons from Kamalism (the secularist model), Nasserism (the nationalist model), Iran (the revolutionary model) and Afghanistan (the *jihad* model), and now seek to blur the sharper distinctions within their societies. This "muddle through" approach is about state preservation, and the chief objective of these governments is to undermine the organizations that can create or mobilize social movements (like the Muslim Brotherhood). The message here is simple: the answer to Al Qaida's Islamism is not secularism, but rather a kind of "folk" Islam along with the attendant traces of Islamic conservatism that come with it—in short, this amounts to "state-sponsored Islamism" or "Islamic fundamentalism with a state veneer."

As stated previously, whether Al Qaida's Osama bin Laden or Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the focus of their campaigns is to compete for control of Islam's grand narrative within this broader milieu. Some experts believe that this is a unique moment in terms of the Shia-Sunni balance in that the newly empowered Shia majority in Iraq, the rise of Iran as a regional power, and the growth of Shia influence across the region are combining to create a "Shia moment" in the history of Middle East politics.[185] Reflecting on the Islamists, others argue that Al Qaida's moment has passed and that the movement is gradually and morbidly self-destructing because it cannot deliver anything but mayhem and violence. In truth, experts have never been able to accurately forecast strategic futures, and in their defense, this is almost impossible. What is certain, however, is that the United States can ill afford to sustain a one-dimensional approach to the Middle East and Central Asia. This is not just about Al Qaida—rather, it is a return to the enduring power politics of previous times, with the exception that one of the 21st century players—the Al-Qaida/Islamist phenomenon—is a non-state actor. A new and comprehensive strategy is required—one that is informed by and takes into account Islam's historical imperatives and well as its modern resurgence.

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[185] Ibid., 184.

Resurgent Islam's Components, Ideology, and Grand Strategies: Key Points

- The major players in the strategic global competition to determine "who speaks for Islam" are Saudi Arabia and Iran, as the Sunni and Shiite anchor states, and the Islamist/Al Qaida movement.

- **Aggregating Aspects of Islamic Ideology:**
  - These trends are macro-ideological and rise above the schisms and sectarianism that plague Islam at the regional and local levels.
  - The macro-ideological divide is less a conflict between "Western" and "Muslim" values, but rather a schism between religious and non-religious people.
  - Western secularism evokes an aggregating and negative response from resurgent Islam.
  - Resurgent Islam actively perceives Western-driven globalization as a homogenizing, secularizing, identity-destroying phenomenon.
  - Sayyid Qutb is monumental to Islamic resurgence because he re-introduced the concept of *jahiliyyah* as an aggregating mechanism and an ideological device that allowed him to draw a dividing line between the Muslim world and everyone else.
  - *Jahiliyyah* is a condition of sinfulness, injustice, suffering, and ignorance of Islam's divine guidance.
  - The doctrine of *jahiliyya* appeals to purity, righteousness, and the divine inspiration of Islam vis-à-vis what many Muslim's perceive as the corruption of a secular world.
  - This secularism versus religion macro-ideological level resonates with Muslims writ large, without reference to sects or schisms. In the past, it was tapped into by the likes of Al-Afghani, Abduh, Rida, Qutb, among many others, regardless of what Muslim tradition (Sunni, Shia, or Sufi) or what country (Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, etc) that they come from. They tend(ed) to see the West in the same terms—as a challenge to the original intent of the prophet and the timelessness of the Qur'an, as a source of *jahiliyya* or corruption vis-à-vis the purity of Islam, and as an existential challenge to the "rightly guided way."

- **Al Qaida Strategy and Doctrine:**
  - Al Qaida is at its core a revolutionary movement that views itself as engaged in a millennial struggle with the *secular* West.
  - Al Qaida's Islamist revolutionaries have not hijacked their religion and they are not its nominal followers—instead, they should be seen as Islamic "purists" who passionately follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed.
  - Al Qaida's revolutionaries believe in a concept of "forever war" or "perpetual war."
  - At its core, Al Qaida's strategy remains connected to its Afghan beginnings and finds its greatest resonance as an Islamic liberation ideology—oriented against the West.
  - The doctrinal foundation is a meta-narrative—the founding myth which encompasses the story of the Prophet Muhammad and his "rightly guided followers." This narrative incorporates the backbone of Al Qaida's message—namely that there is a global conspiracy working to destroy Islam. This victimization myth is played up alongside the founding myth in order to bring converts and compel action.

- Immediately overlaying this meta-narrative is a cluster of key doctrines of Islamic metaphysics: *Tawhid, Al-Wala wal-Bara, Jihad, Aqidah,* and *Takfir.*
- Al Qaida's core strategy has proven to be enduring for several reasons: (1) the ideology provides a universal rallying cry that resonates locally, but applies globally; (2) Al Qaida's operatives continually empower one another with the new skills and knowledge that they need to counter the security efforts that are being launched against them; (3) the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq has provided both a fertile recruitment narrative (i.e. Islam is under assault from the West) as well as a proving-ground for the perfection of tactical combat operations; and (4) Al Qaida has shown unexpected pragmatism and adaptability.
- Al Qaida's revolutionaries have evolved to higher levels of strategic art and planning, including what some have called "*Jihadi* Strategic Studies."
- The "who's who" list of Al Qaida's new generation of strategic thinkers includes Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, Abu Yahya, Abu Bakr Najk, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, though none of these men reach the level of sophistication of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri.
- Al Suri's *Global Resistance Call* was published online in January 2005 and immediately gained widespread publicity; one of the sub-chapters of the book on training doctrines has been reformatted and distributed as a short 12-page manual entitled *Modern Methods in Military Training*.
- Al Suri's writings are sophisticated, scientific and methodological, and include definitions and pedagogical discussions regarding types of *jihad*, military theory, ideological mobilization, targeting doctrine, deterrence, operational art, small unit structure and tactics, and training.
- Al Suri calls for the creation of independent Global Islamic Resistance Units (GIRUs).
- Al Suri defines one type of GIRU as a Strategic Operation Unit formed by individuals who have (1) a strategic understanding of the nature of the struggle and its political, military, and strategic aspects; (2) very high financial capabilities; (3) very high security and organizational capabilities; (4) very high military skills; and (5) *knowledge and operational abilities in acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction, in times when there is a need for retaliation, or for the strategic settlement of the conflict with America*.

- **Iran and Saudi Arabia: The Intertwined Strategies of Power Competitors:**
  - Three formative events that occurred in relative close proximity to each other have shaped Iranian foreign policy and strategy: (1) 1979 Iranian Revolution, (2) the hostage crisis, and (3) the eight year Iran-Iraq war.
  - As Iran continues to compete with Saudi Arabia for the role of Islam's power state, it has to work to diminish the "Shiite" factor, and in doing so pursues the perennial twin strategy of anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism, two themes that find empathy throughout Islam regardless of the sectarian divide.
  - Iran learned the wrong lessons from the hostage crisis, namely that there are little to no consequences for flaunting international law.
  - The Iran-Iraq war reinforced Iran's conclusions about the hostage crisis. International agreements or treaties are seen as worthless because nobody in the international

community (1) enforced international boundaries and demanded an Iraqi withdrawal, and (2) no international conventions with regard to chemical weapons were enforced by the international community when Iraq launched these weapons against the Iranian "human wave" attacks.

- Perhaps the most significant lesson learned by the Iranian leadership as a result of the Iran-Iraq war was that Iran was invaded by Iraq because it did not have the most powerful weapons at its disposal—namely, nuclear weapons.
- Iran has been one of the chief beneficiaries of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East. In the first Gulf War, the United States and its coalition partners inflicted a punishing defeat on Iraq, thereby directly bolstering Iranian security. The U.S. assault on the Taliban in Afghanistan in late 2001 and on Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 2003 met with quiet approval in Tehran. The United States has unwittingly opened the door for Iranian opportunism—chiefly by systematically ameliorating Iran's chief regional threats.
- The competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran may be seen as a competition between Islamic fundamentalisms: Iran's Shiite "red" revolutionary fundamentalism versus the Saudi Sunni "green" revivalist fundamentalism.
- Saudi Arabia remains a theocratic police state governed by a corrupt House of Saud—perhaps one of the most egregious example of self-serving, theo-monarchical rule. The House of Saud continues to encourage worldwide propagation of Sunni Islam while simultaneously lending a façade of official support to Western attempts to fight the Al Qaida and its associated movements.
- Whether Al Qaida's Osama bin Laden or Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad or Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, the focus of their campaigns is to compete for control of Islam's grand narrative within this broader milieu.
- Some experts believe that the historical Shia-Sunni balance is shifting due to the newly empowered Shia majority in Iraq, the rise of Iran as a regional power, and the growth of Shia influence across the region.

II. Toward a New National Security Strategy

This paper argues that a refreshed strategic approach is necessary in order to confront the emerging security environment. It is neither unique nor merely cynical to claim that the promises of globalism have not delivered a more stable world—not from economic turmoil nor from military or other threats of violence—and that the United States enters the 21st century tempered by the strategic realities of a world shaped by the enduring presence of global power competition. Resurgent Islam will play a major role in that environment, but not as perhaps would have been forecast in the aftermath of 9/11. Al Qaida's Islamists are one of only several aspirants trying to claim title to Islam's "grand narrative." The competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia for the role of Islam's power state is likely to occur in parallel with the efforts of other great powers—such as Russia, China, and the nations of the European Union—to assert their influence and pursue their national interests. This competitive environment will be infused with several macro trends: (1) a pronounced number of failing or weak states that willingly or unwittingly provide safe havens for non-state actors or what Richard Schultz calls armed groups; (2) a continued growth in information technology, especially with improvements to the depth, breadth, and speed of access; (3) the spread of specialized technical manufacturing and industrial knowledge; (4) a persistent quest to satisfy national energy requirements; (5) a sharpening focus on space-launch capability and space-based national resources (economic and military); and (6) pressures both from actual nuclear weapons proliferation as well as a global call for nuclear abolition.   While full-scale war between the great powers seems less likely, especially between those armed with nuclear weapons, it does suggest that the 21st century will be characterized by what Rupert Smith calls "a cognizance that we are living in a world of confrontations and conflicts rather than one of war and peace."[186] Smith uses the term "war amongst the people" to capture the idea that the new paradigm of conflict is based on "the concept of a continuous crisscrossing between confrontation and conflict, regardless of whether a state is facing another state or non-state actor."[187] This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the presence of failing or weak states,

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[186] Smith, op. cit., 374.
[187] Ibid., 19.

especially where local government has an incestuous relationship with non-state actors, armed groups, or trans-national movements, as for example in Pakistan or Sudan. The new paradigm means that "there is no secluded battlefield upon which armies engage, nor are there necessarily armies…this is not asymmetric warfare, [but] it is the reality in which the people in the streets and houses and fields—all the people, everywhere—are the battlefield."[188] It also means that non-state actors or armed groups are likely to propagate amorphously across national boundaries, thereby creating complex military, sovereignty, and law enforcement issues. In response to this conflicted environment, this paper argues for a three-pronged approach that seeks to bolster sovereignty, enhance deterrence, and reconstitute diplomacy.

Sovereignty

The concept of national sovereignty is the core ethos of the Westphalian system—it carries enduring historical and modernizing relevance. Sovereignty means that states (1) have the right to self-governance; (2) incur an obligation to abide by international law; and (3) will be held accountable for the actions of their citizens. It is in the national interest of the United States to bolster the concept of sovereignty because sovereign states form a locus of actors which the United States can predictably interact with, craft relationships with, hold accountable, and exert leverage against. The concept of sovereignty is particularly relevant, not only because state sovereignty seems under assault in the 21st century, but because the origins of sovereignty are in the birth of the Westphalian system, which replaced religion with nationalism as an identity-generating mechanism.

The Westphalian System. It was the 3rd century Roman emperor Constantine who, in a bid to stabilize his faltering empire, had opportunistically intertwined religion and the state. Ironically, this fusion of the sacred and the secular, best exemplified by Pope Leo III and the emperor Charlemagne with the pope providing the crown to the most powerful ruler in Europe, served in part as a response to a persistent challenge of Muslim armies encroaching on Christendom's peripheries during the 7th and 8th century. However, Martin Luther's 1520 revolt rocked the institutionalized relationship between the Catholic Church and the Holy

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[188] Ibid., 5-6.

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Roman Emperor, ushering in a turbulent century of religious warfare—in particular the infamous Thirty Years' War—that would eventually give birth to the modern nation-state. In the temporary 1555 Peace of Augsburg, each state within the fracturing Holy Roman Empire received the liberty to choose to be either Lutheran or Catholic—*cuius regio eius religio* (whose the region, his the religion).[189] While individual religious freedom was not permitted, it was significant that individual rulers and states could now choose their own religion. By the mid 16th century, John Calvin articulated a further refinement in the relationship between the divine and political realms. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin argued that "man is under two kinds of government—one *spiritual*, by which the conscience is formed to piety and the service of God; the other *political*, by which a man is instructed in the duties of humanity and civility, which are to be observed in an intercourse with mankind [emphasis added]."[190] Further expounding on the duties of each realm, Calvin wrote that the "spiritual jurisdiction pertains to the life of the soul," and the "temporal jurisdiction pertains not only to the provision of food and clothing, but to the enactment of laws to regulate a man's life among his neighbors by the rules of holiness, integrity, and sobriety." Coming at the end of the wars of religion, the 1648 Peace of Westphalia upended the prevailing order. Beyond implicitly recognizing the legitimacy of territorial states, the treaty inaugurated further religious freedoms by (1) officially recognizing Calvinism, and (2) by moving beyond the Augsburg principle of *cuius regio eius religio*. Westphalia granted to individual states superiority in all ecclesial and political matters; but just as importantly, it granted the right to *individual* citizens to choose their own religion, the right to public worship, and protection, subsequent to a five-year grace period, from expulsion by a prince of differing religion.[191] Thus, the principles of the separation of church and state, as well as religious liberty and the right to religious self-expression, are embedded in the Peace of Westphalia. To summarize, the Westphalian paradigm enabled three profound changes: (1) it removed religion as the primary identity mechanism, and replaced it with

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[189] R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, 6th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 78-9.

[190] John Calvin, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion," in *Western Heritage: A Reader*, 1st ed. rev., ed. History Department, Hillsdale College (Acton, MA: Tapestry Press, 2000), 473.

[191] Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 506.

nationalism; (2) it ushered in the international system of sovereign nation states; and (3) it made religion the subject of individual choice.

Keeping in mind that a national strategy must appeal to the domestic population before it can be effectively articulated internationally, sovereignty is a concept that Americans inherently grasp and feel comfortable with. It fits well within the ethos of Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed…" Americans understand that national sovereignty enables our government to work to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty." Furthermore, George Washington's 1796 farewell appeal finds resonance with Americans, including his warning to take "care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture" and to "safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies." His calls for "harmony" and "liberal intercourse" with all nations, for an "equal and impartial hand" that neither seeks nor grants exclusive favors or preferences is how Americans expect to be treated themselves within the international community. In short, sovereignty is something that the American public understands and appreciates—it confers the concept of individual natural rights to the level of nation states— and Americans generally concur that states in the international system should be afforded the right to pursue their own courses of action, provided that those pursuits do not impinge on the sovereignty of other nations.

Sovereignty as a Grand Strategy. Writing about the concept of sovereignty as a national strategy, Anna Simons et al propose the following basic "political grand bargain" with the rest of the world: "America will guard its sovereign prerogatives, responding to violations of sovereignty with overwhelming force, in return for which it promises other states that it will not infringe on *their* sovereign prerogatives, including their rights to cultural integrity, national

dignity, and religious freedom."[192] As Simons et al have written, "Sovereignty represents the most useful double-edged sword in the international community's arsenal. Sovereignty implies that every state has the right to order its society according to its own preferences. In return, every state bears the responsibility to prevent its citizens from transgressing the sovereignty of others."

Under a sovereignty strategy, the United States would continue to engage and interact with key partners and allies (e.g. NATO countries, Australia, Japan, South Korea) who have shared interests and security concerns. In terms of global competitor states (e.g. Russia and China), the relationship would continue to evolve as a relationship between great powers. Where a sovereignty strategy would have the greatest impact is vis-à-vis the category of states that "struggle" or "fail" to maintain territorial control and compliance with international law (e.g. Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia). In the event of attacks that emanate against the United States or its citizens from a failing or weak state, the United States would punish by military destruction (without occupation or subsequent rebuilding). The problems of weak or failing states should not deter U.S. action. In the words of Simon et al, while "failed states have no apparent central control and make no significant effort to govern their citizens," there is always somebody who represents authority and therefore bears responsibility." In the event of an attack against the United States, if the resident authority of the country from which the attack was mounted (be it a warlord, a group of elders, a tribal chief, or a religious authority) does not meet U.S. demands , then the United States reaction must be an overwhelming application of military force to punish both the violators and their supporters.[193]

A national strategy based on sovereignty would (1) abstain from attempting to "evangelize" the rest of the world with the American vision; (2) curtail or eliminate many foreign aid programs; and (3) subvert the aggregating effect of transnational Islamic resurgence. First, sovereignty assumes that American exceptionalism is exactly that— exceptional to the circumstances of the United States—and that we would do better to serve as

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[192] Anna Simons et al, "The Sovereignty Solution," in The American Interest (Volume II, Number 4, Spring 2007), 34.

[193] Ibid., 36-37.

a "Beacon on the Hill" to those who are interested, rather than a "Crusader Nation," as the Islamists seem wont of accusing the United States of acting. The Statue of Liberty stands famously in New York harbor, beckoning to those who are naturally attracted to America. Sovereignty would refresh this image of America, as a champion of freedom and rights to those who come voluntarily to her shores, instead of as an imperial power forcibly spreading secular democracy throughout the world. The inevitable result of America's desire to liberalize more oppressive regimes is that these efforts tend to fuel nativist responses. The Bill of Rights is an affront to Islamists because their ideology is driven by the all-encompassing unity of Allah—not the natural rights of man. As Simons, who is a trained anthropologist writes, "the more vociferously we beat the drum for Muslim women's liberation, the more we cause nativists to oppose us because they can't countenance the atomization of families and society to which our version of equality all too plainly leads, and because what we promote contravenes Quranic common sense as well as law."[194] Rather, as Simon has written elsewhere, to sever the link between anti-westernization and violence (and to live up to the political grand bargain of a sovereignty strategy) will require that we "grant Muslims [and others] space, autonomy and freedom to operate communally, according to their moral code—no matter how immoral we find it."[195]

Second, a sovereignty strategy would curtail and/or eliminate most long-term foreign aid programs. This would address the image problem that comes from open-ended foreign aid commitments to illiberal governments (Egypt being one of the most egregious examples). Simon adroitly notes that "one of the things feeding resentment among young, educated and upwardly mobile males (especially) in what used to be called the Third World is that their governments would rather pocket money from aid and foreign assistance projects than rely on their own citizens for development."[196] In other words, foreign aid breaks down the accountability mechanisms between a population and its government. It does this by mitigating the pressure for a government to reform and address so-called "root cause"

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[194] Ibid, 43.
[195] Anna Simon, "Axis of Trouble: Male Youth, Factional Politics, and Religion," Long-Term Strategy Project, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, September 2005.
[196] Ibid., 41.

problems. Said differently, open-ended foreign aid inoculates a regime against having to make true structural reform because it can rely on that aid to ameliorate the superficial manifestations of the deeper problems. A recent Wall Street Journal report by Dambisa Moyo, an economist and the author of *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way For Africa*, seems to bear this out. According to Moyo, "A nascent economy needs a transparent and accountable government and an efficient civil service to help meet social needs. Its people need jobs and a belief in their country's future. A surfeit of aid has been shown to be unable to help achieve these goals."[197] Furthermore,

> A constant stream of "free" money is a perfect way to keep an inefficient or simply bad government in power. As aid flows in, there is nothing more for the government to do—it doesn't need to raise taxes, and as long as it pays the army, it doesn't have to take account of its disgruntled citizens. No matter that its citizens are disenfranchised (as with no taxation there can be no representation). All the government really needs to do is to court and cater to its foreign donors to stay in power.[198]

Those who would point to the $13 billion ($100 billion in today's dollars) that was spent during the Marshall Plan to restore democracy in Europe fail to acknowledge that the Marshall Plan was "short, sharp, and finite"—unlike long-term and open-ended foreign aid to countries like Egypt, where it imbues the government with a sense of entitlement and discourages political and economic accountability and reform.[199] Some knowledgeable observers suggest an additional wrinkle associated with long-term foreign aid. In reference to the possibilities of an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, they raise the following question: "what's in it" for Egypt or Jordan if the Israelis and Palestinians finally stop fighting? Egypt and Jordan are lavish recipients of U.S. aid, which would almost certainly dry up if the Palestinian issue goes away. Why would it be in Egypt or Jordan's interest to get rid of the conflict? Indeed, the same applies for Hezbollah in Lebanon, in that its *raison d'être* would wither away. There seems to be plenty of *realpolitik* rationale about why there is value for many of the players in sustaining this particular conflict. None of them (with the exception of Israel) is so self-sufficient and integrated into the global economy to perceive the conflict as being "bad for business." In fact,

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[197] Dambisa Moyo, "Why Foreign Aid is Hurting Africa," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 21, 2009.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.

the conflict grants them claim to financial patronage from the United States and the World Bank. In addition, many of the key players gain political stature and relevancy on the international stage because the conflict exists.

Third, the irony is hard to miss in that a national security strategy that seeks to re-emphasize the concept of sovereignty, thereby bolstering nationalism as an identity mechanism, would simultaneously undermine the effects of transnational religious resurgence—like that of Islam. Indeed, the Prophet Mohammad worked hard to mitigate the fractious effects of tribalism—a form of primordial nationalism—and his proscription was to conceive of Islam and the *umma* as a replacement identity that would subvert tribalism. In reality, tribalism has survived even Islam's identity-generating capacity. A rejuvenation of the concept of sovereignty, and concomitant focus on nation states and the rights and responsibilities of those states, would simply take advantage of the schisms that are already in place.

In summary, sovereignty would bolster state responsibility by recognizing a state's inherent rights to ideological and political self-determination, while also holding it accountable for its actions and the actions of its citizenry. Simon et al offer the following potential benefits of a sovereignty strategy:

> First, it turns accountability into an eminently useful tool. A posture built around state responsibility makes clear whom we hold accountable and how, and it forces the U.S. government to be overt, consistent, and coherent in its responses.

> Second, holding states accountable for their actions is sustainable because it draws power from the U.S. Constitution, resonates with how Americans typically behave toward one another, and is not a policy that can be shattered by surprise or attack.

> Third, strengthening state responsibility also advances (through indirect means) the desired end state of any U.S. strategy: the spread of representative government, [though] representative government need not look like Western democracy.

As a grand strategy, sovereignty would preserve American values at home (the Beacon on the Hill) and clarify (and limit) American actions abroad. It is a strategy that could help to regenerate a national consensus with respect to national security because it is a policy that resonates with the ideas of the American founding and one that Americans could relate to and

support. Finally, a sovereignty grand strategy would also indirectly counteract the emerging 21st century phenomenon of weak or failing states by recognizing the legitimacy of incumbent governments. Said differently, sovereignty means that the United States does not seek "regime change" but rather "regime accountability" and holding a regime accountable inherently recognizes the regime's power and responsibility to govern.

Sovereignty: Key Points

- The concept of sovereignty is the core ethos of the Westphalian system—it carries enduring historical and modernizing relevance. Sovereignty means that states (1) have the right to self-governance; (2) incur an obligation to abide by international law; and (3) will be held accountable for the actions of their citizens.

- **The Westphalian System:**
  - The Westphalian paradigm enabled three profound changes: (1) it removed religion as the primary identity mechanism, and replaced it with nationalism; (2) it ushered in the international system of sovereign nation states; and (3) it made religion the subject of individual choice.

- **Sovereignty as a Grand Strategy:**
  - Sovereignty should be conceived as a grand strategy much like containment was during the Cold War.
  - Sovereignty recognizes a state's right to ideological and political self-determination, but also holds it accountable for its actions and the actions of its citizenry.
  - A national strategy based on sovereignty would (1) abstain from attempting to "evangelize" the rest of the world with the American vision; (2) curtail or eliminate many foreign aid programs; and (3) subvert the aggregating effect of transnational Islamic resurgence.
  - Sovereignty re-asserts American exceptionalism—that the U.S. would do better to serve as a "Beacon on the Hill" to those who are interested, rather than a "Crusader Nation," as the Islamists often accuse the United States of acting.
  - Sovereignty is a strategy that could help to regenerate a national consensus with respect to national security because it is a policy that resonates with the ideas of the American founding (the Declaration of Independence) and one that Americans could relate to and support.
  - America's desire to liberalize more oppressive regimes fuels nativist responses. The Bill of Rights is an affront to Islamists because their ideology is driven by the all-encompassing unity of Allah—not the natural rights of man.
  - Curtailment of most foreign aid would address problem that comes from open-ended foreign aid commitments to illiberal governments. Foreign aid breaks down the accountability mechanisms between a population and its government by mitigating the pressure for a government to reform.
  - Sovereignty bolsters nationalism as an identity mechanism, and this may simultaneously undermine the effects of transnational religious resurgence.
  - Sovereignty would indirectly counteract the phenomenon of weak or failing states by recognizing the legitimacy of incumbent governments. Sovereignty means that the U.S. does not seek "regime change" but rather "regime accountability" and holding a regime accountable inherently recognizes the regime's power and responsibility to govern.

Deterrence

A renaissance in deterrence strategy is essential to complement a sovereignty grand strategy. Recall from above that the simple grand bargain built into sovereignty is that the United States recognizes country X's right to self-determination (regardless of how noxious its ideology may seem) but equally holds that country's leadership accountable for its actions and the actions of its citizens if those actions are hostile to the territory of the United States or the lives of American citizens. Deterrence serves as a key accountability mechanism in this formula. United States Joint Doctrine states that the objective of deterrence operations is "to decisively influence the adversary's decision-making calculus in order to prevent hostile actions against U.S. vital interests." The capability to "decisively influence" implies that deterrence is essentially a psychological function—something that is focused on affecting the mind and decision processes of a potential adversary.   In its most basic sense, deterrence is based on leveraging a threat in order to dissuade an action. The threat has to be credible—and this requires both a clear communication of intent as well as a robust and capable force structure that leaves no doubt in the mind of the enemy.

A Nuclear Malaise. During the Cold War, an entire cadre of experts studied the intricacies of deterrence in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Declaratory policy was carefully crafted to match a survivable and redundant strategic nuclear force posture. With the end of the Cold War, however, nuclear knowhow has atrophied in everything from the weapons systems themselves to the national laboratories to the defense industrial complex to science and engineering experience to the understanding of strategy and doctrine. It is not an exaggeration to assert that in the two decades since 1989, the U.S. nuclear infrastructure has aged almost to the point of no return. According to the current Chief of Staff of the United Air Force, if decisions are not made within the next 2-3 years on warhead and delivery systems replacements and modernization, then the United States will face dangerous and irreconcilable gaps in the nuclear component of the Triad within the next 10-15 years.

The current malaise is exacerbated by an emerging debate about the perceived utility of nuclear weapons in general. A now well-known op-ed published in the Wall Street Journal in January 2007 opened a Pandora 's Box in that the respected authors—Henry Kissinger, George

Schultz, William Perry, and Sam Nunn—argue that the time has come to pursue a world free of nuclear weapons by reducing reliance on nuclear weapons globally. This renewed emphasis on nuclear abolition has found resonance with those who argue that the United States, as a *bona fide* Non-Proliferation Treaty signatory, is bound by Article VI of the treaty to work toward general nuclear disarmament.   As Elbridge Colby has written, nuclear abolition and non-proliferation is now an "ascendant strategy" and one that, in the minds of its advocates, overshadows the advantages of our nuclear arsenal.[200]

However, as Michael Rühle points out, nuclear abolition really amounts to strategic escapism in that "the closer one looks at the abolitionist conundrum the more one realizes that the attention being paid to these suggestions has little to do with their plausibility, and much with the disappointment about the foreign and security policy legacy of President George W. Bush."[201] Not that the abolition of nuclear weapons is an unattractive notion—at least in an abstract sense. It is intellectual dishonest to simply and artificially separate the two sides of this debate into the "pro" and "anti" nuclear weapons advocacies. Most, if not all, policy makers would prefer to live in a world without the threats posed by nuclear weapons. However, nuclear abolition would require a tectonic change in international relations from a status quo defined by competition to a status quo that espouses cooperation, and a concomitant willingness to renounce national self-interest in deference to an international "common good." Thus, as Colby writes, "Achieving a world without nuclear weapons would entail sacrificing national political autonomy, and in large part, independence, because a world of free and separate states must always exist with the possibility of serious conflict, and that tension is incompatible with laying down the most effective instruments of deterrence."[202]

At its core, the abolition argument is flawed for several reasons. First, a world without nuclear weapons would be inherently less safe, and therefore less desirable. United States nuclear forces provide security through deterrence and protect the country from the most

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[200] Elbridge Colby, "Nuclear Abolition: A Dangerous Illusion," Orbis, Summer 2008, 425.

[201] Michael Rühle, "Good and Bad Nuclear Weapons: Berlin's Part in Shaping Nuclear Reality," Körber Policy Paper No. 3, Körber Foundation (International Affairs), April 2009.

[202] Elbridge Colby, Review Essay, George Perkovich and James Acton, "Abolishing Nuclear Weapons," Adelphi Paper No 396, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 118.

devastating attacks possible.[203] Today's overwhelming U.S. conventional superiority is not

guaranteed forever. Furthermore, nuclear weapons have rendered the devastating wars

between the great industrial powers of the 20th century virtually obsolete. Nuclear weapons

act as a hedge against future great power rivals with expansive conventional forces. Moreover,

as Rühle observes, a world without nuclear weapons requires a global inspection system of

unprecedented effectiveness. And even if an iron-clad system of inspection could be devised

and total global nuclear disarmament could be verified, Colby posits the following questions:

how can a nation be sure that its opponents will not re-arm—and—if the capability to re-arm

exists (as it most certainly will), then how can one rely on another not to cheat?[204] History has

shown that determined nation states can successfully build nuclear weapons programs in

secrecy, as demonstrated by North Korea, India, Pakistan, and Israel, as well as South Africa's

voluntarily aborted program. In addition, Rühle correctly points out that "Iran demonstrates

how a country, without incurring any serious consequences, can use the privileges of the NPT

for the purposes of nuclear militarization."[205] Iran, as a signatory to the NPT, was able to keep

its uranium enrichment programs secret from the IAEA for 18 years.

Nuclear abolitionists and disarmament advocates also seem to discount the significant

and security-enhancing role that U.S. nuclear weapons play in providing a nuclear umbrella to

key allies and partners. Extended deterrence contributes to nuclear non-proliferation because

allies can rely on U.S. nuclear security guarantees, thereby eliminating the requirement to

develop indigenous nuclear forces. Both Germany and Japan can be seen as "virtual" nuclear

weapons states owing to their nuclear expertise and scientific and industrial capabilities. U.S.

allies expect the United States to maintain credible nuclear forces. According to Keith Payne,

"NATO countries have indicated that U.S. strategic nuclear forces should be comparable to

Russia" and "Japanese officials have indicated that U.S. nuclear forces should be 'superior' to

those of China."[206] Indeed, a 2007 report by the Department of State's International Security

Advisory Board concludes:

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[203] Colby, "Nuclear Abolition: A Dangerous Illusion," op. cit., 427.
[204] Ibid, 429.
[205] Rühle, 21.
[206] Keith Payne, "How Much is Enough?: A Goal-Driven Approach to Defining Key Principles," Draft Paper, National Institute for Public Policy, 2009, 12.

There is clear evidence in diplomatic channels that U.S. assurances to include the nuclear umbrella have been, and continue to be, the single most important reason many allies have foresworn nuclear weapons. This umbrella is too important to sacrifice on the basis of an unproven ideal that nuclear disarmament in the U.S. would lead to a more secure world...a lessening of the U.S. nuclear umbrella could very well trigger a cascade in East Asia and the Middle East.[207]

It could be argued that U.S. nuclear security guarantees not only hedge against nuclear proliferation by U.S. allies, but also against a broader nuclear cascade. Michael Rühle summarizes this idea succinctly: "American security guarantees are the *conditio sine qua non* of a predictable global order."[208]

The Second Nuclear Age. Robert Haffa et al offer a helpful way to approach the current strategic context in their paper entitled "Deterrence and Defense in the Second Nuclear Age." In it, they argue that the first nuclear age came to a close at the end of the Cold War. The stand-out feature of the current strategic environment—the second nuclear age—is that "the competition is no longer confined to two principal players. Its actors, extensive and growing in both number and nature, add a level of complexity and volatility to today's security environment."[209] In contradistinction to the Cold War, the second nuclear age is characterized by evidence of collaboration among state and non-state actors on proliferating nuclear technologies; weak or non-existent nuclear command, control, and communications systems; limited communications channels among potential adversaries; uncertain capabilities and intentions among many nuclear actors; and escalation with nuclear first-use as a plausible scenario.[210] The more classic threat posed by peer (Russia) or near-peer (China) nuclear powers is most closely aligned with the older Cold War paradigm. Of the five original nuclear weapons states, the United States is the only one that is not currently modernizing its nuclear arsenal. To one degree or another, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China are all pursuing nuclear modernization programs. Beyond these countries, other actors (such as India and Pakistan) continue to seek and maintain nuclear weapons to assuage their primary security

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[207] Ibid.
[208] Rühle, 41.
[209] Robert Haffa, Ravi Hichkad, Dana Johnson, and Philip Pratt, "Deterrence and Defense in the Second Nuclear Age," Analysis Center Papers, Northrop Grumman, March 2009, 5-6.
[210] Ibid, 7.

concerns. However, according to Haffa et al, nuclear weapons in the second nuclear age are also seen as a symbol of prestige and power, and this is particularly true among aspiring new powers. These nuclear aspirants principally include countries like Iran and to a lesser extent Syria. Some observers assert that Iran's drive to build a nuclear weapon symbolizes the quest for a "Shiite bomb" to countervail Pakistan's nuclear capability, which many categorize as the "Sunni bomb." Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the erstwhile Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Pakistan, is said to have offered the following thoughts about Pakistan's quest for a nuclear bomb: "We will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own."[211]

Iran continues to work toward a nuclear weapons capability undeterred by the IAEA, international sanctions, and assorted diplomatic pressures and overtures. Iran has repeatedly and successfully thwarted international efforts to slow down its development programs. In fact, most experts were surprised by the speed at which Iran was able to set up and modernize its centrifuges and overcome a host of technical difficulties, while simultaneously and in parallel continue to pursue development of delivery systems such as long-range missiles. It is important to note that Iran (unlike Pakistan and India) is an NPT signatory state, and therefore is bound by the NPT's ban on nuclear militarization. In Rühle's words, "if in the full sight of the international community Iran becomes a Nuclear Weapons State, and manages to achieve this goal to the bitter end within the Treaty, then the notion of the NPT as a pillar of global international order will become virtually meaningless."[212] That Iran would continue to violate international law is not surprising, given the aforementioned lessons that it learned in the wake of the 1979 hostage crisis and the 8-year Iraq-Iran war.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is one of several Arabian Gulf countries that are assumed to become part of a nuclear cascade if and once Iran acquires a nuclear weapons capability. Evidence of strategic unease includes the following: (1) since Iran's nuclear programs became public five years ago, 10 countries in the greater Middle East have announced plans to build nuclear power plants for the first time; (2) Egypt signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with France in 2008; (3) Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president, told the March 2009 Arab Summit in Riyadh that "a nuclear armed Iran with hegemonic ambitions is the greatest threat to Arab

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[211] Ibid., 6.
[212] Rühle, 23.

nations today"; (4) in November 2008, France concluded a nuclear cooperation accord with the

UAE; (5) in March 2009, the Saudi parliament, or Shura Council, advocated an Arab "nuclear

response" to the Iranian threat and a four-nation Arab summit held in Riyadh endorsed that

analysis and gave the green light for a pan-Arab quest for a "complete nuclear industry."[213]

According to Amir Taheri writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Iran's rivals for regional leadership,

especially Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, are aware of the propaganda appeal of the Islamic

Republic's claim of being 'the first Muslim superpower' capable of defying the West and rivaling

it in scientific and technological fields. In that context, Tehran's development of long-range

missiles and the Muslim world's first space satellite are considered political coups."[214]

Undoubtedly, as the largest Sunni Gulf state and as the chief rival to Iran's quest to

become the Islamic power state, Saudi Arabia can ill afford to ignore the challenge posed by an

emerging Iranian nuclear capability. The Saudis allegedly started to hedge against Iran by

providing several hundred million dollars of support for the Pakistani nuclear program.[215]

However, nuclear engagement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia apparently included

discussions about nuclear burden sharing as well. According to Rühle, "some years ago high-

ranking members of the Pakistani armed forces publicly toyed with the idea of 'stationing'

Pakistani nuclear warheads on Saudi missiles." Furthermore, a "Saudi planning document

circulated in the autumn of 2003 suggested that such an 'extended deterrent'—in which

Pakistan would retain control over the warheads—might be a possible alternative to the

increasingly unrealistic option of a nuclear-free Middle East on the one hand and a national

Saudi deterrent on the other."[216] In some ways, this potentially burgeoning nuclear

relationship would only complement the already strong politico-religious ties between Pakistan

and Saudi Arabia.

All of this would be an artificially sterile conversation without also including the concern

of a "Talibanization"[217] of nuclear-armed Pakistan and all of the strategic implications of that

difficult and challenging scenario. In addition, North Korea's ongoing efforts to develop a

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[213] Amir Taheri, "Iran Has Started a Mideast Arms Race," *Wall Street Journal*, March 23, 2007.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Rühle, 24.
[216] Ibid., 25.
[217] Ibid.

reliable long-range missile capability does not bode well for the future, given that it has already demonstrated a nuclear weapons capability and has shown Iranian-like obduracy with respect to the IAEA and other internationally-sanctioned diplomatic overtures to permanently suspend and dismantle its nuclear weapons program.

A U.S. Nuclear Renaissance. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to suggest a detailed roadmap for a refreshed U.S. deterrence strategy,[218] it seems helpful to propose several themes that may serve to bolster U.S. nuclear credibility. Within the context of the second nuclear age and given what Keith Payne calls the "kaleidoscope of opponents, threats and potential threats,"[219] the United States should first seek to adapt deterrence strategy to the current dynamics of the international environment. The phrase "tailored deterrence" has gained some favor among experts because it implies that deterrence has to be made to fit the particulars and context of a given situation. This is no longer a "one size fits all" approach, but instead focuses on gaining specialized and deep knowledge about an entire set of potential adversaries. M. Elaine Bunn refers to this as "tailoring to specific actors and specific situations," but also in tailoring U.S. capabilities and communications to those actors and situations as well.[220] U.S. deterrence should be flexible and responsive vis-à-vis the full spectrum of threats, from peer and near-peer nuclear powers (Russia/China), to regional powers and rogue states armed with WMD (Pakistan/North Korea), to non-state actors and armed groups that seek to acquire a nuclear, or at least radiological, weapons capability.   This will inevitably require the accumulation and study of a great deal of specialized and interdisciplinary information. As Keith Payne stated in his 2007 congressional testimony, "Deterrence is now first and foremost a matter of intelligence."[221] Tailored deterrence requires deep country and cultural information gathered from anthropologists, linguists, historians, and psychologists—in addition to the more conventional military intelligence about systems and capabilities. This information needs to be fused together to create a holistic picture of the so-called "how's and why's" that a particular

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[218] All aspects of U.S. deterrence and nuclear weapons strategy are currently under review under the auspices of a Nuclear Posture Review which is to be released sometime in 2009-2010.

[219] Payne, "How Much is Enough?", 4.

[220] M. Elaine Bunn, "Can Deterrence be Tailored?" Strategic Forum No. 225, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, January 2007.

[221] Keith Payne, Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, July 18, 2007

country and its leadership makes decisions. Effective deterrence requires understanding the

enemy's values, objectives, decision-making, perceptions, and risk formulas, and how that

enemy balances the benefits of a particular action versus the costs of that action as well as the

consequences of restraint in that same situation.[222]

One example of the type of tailored deterrence required by the second nuclear age

involves the difficulty of deterring non-state actors or armed groups. Some argue that the

obvious solution to this dilemma is to hold the supplier state responsible. The underlying

assumption is that it is virtually impossible for a non-state actor to develop a nuclear weapons

capability, and therefore there will always be a sponsor state that is playing the role of co-

conspirator. This deterrent prescription starkly means that the United States must "credibly

announce that any state or non-state organization that even tolerates the acquisition of WMD

by terrorists within its borders will be subject to the full wrath of the United States."[223]

However, militarily punishing the "sponsor" state may not always be an action that a U.S.

president will be willing to take. Therefore, tailored deterrence must grapple with the problem

of deterring what some have long held to be "un-deterrable" non-state actors. The challenges

of deterring armed groups are substantial, including the fact that "they are likely to be

'shadowy' groups with no return address, that they miscalculate the consequences of their

actions …, or that they actually seek to provoke a massive response to fit their apocalyptic

vision and cult of martyrdom."[224] Keith Payne refers to them as "high-intensity aggressive

ideologies" that can have "propensities toward martyrdom and apocalyptic visions."[225]

Daunting as it may seem, these groups may nevertheless be deterrable—because every group

or ideology holds something of value, whether this "something" is physical or metaphysical. If

one can determine what that "something" is, then one can start to conceive of how to leverage

against it. In the case of armed groups, deterrence by denial may work better than deterrence

by punishment. The focus of the deterrent effort would be on *denying* the group its objectives.

James Smith and Brent Talbot have conceptualized a multi-level framework that begins to

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[222] Bunn, 2-3.
[223] Haffa et al, 19.
[224] Ibid., 18.
[225] Payne, op. cit., 5.

address this challenge. They argue that there are three levels of deterrence: tactical, operational, and strategic. [226] At the tactical level, the leveraging mechanism for deterrence against an act of terrorism is denial of opportunity. This means that the objective is to delink the combatant from the intended victim, in other words to separate the threat from the target. At the operational level, deterrence of an armed group's military campaign depends on the denial of capability. This involves disrupting organizational recruitment and maintenance, training, access to weapons and sanctuary, communications, and finance. Finally, at the strategic level, deterrence of the macro phenomenon (for example Al Qaida and its message of Islamic revolution) requires the denial of the strategic objective, and the marginalization of the Islamist message from its target population and support base. As Bunn observes, "even terrorists with suicidal inclinations want to die to accomplish something" and so deterrence by denial—denying them the accomplishments or benefits of their actions—may, over time, be the more effective way to think of deterring non-state actors or armed groups. [227]

Because deterrence is not foolproof, especially not against non-state actors or armed groups, the second nuclear age requires offense-defense synchronization. Defenses must be considered within the overall deterrence construct because of several reasons: (1) defenses reinforce deterrence by denial by creating doubt in the mind of the enemy about whether or not that enemy's actions are likely to be successful; (2) defenses increase the costs and complexity of the enemy's planning and potential courses of action; and (3) defenses (especially when they are layered) provide a safety net if deterrence fails. In fact, as Keith Payne argues, defenses serve a vital role in damage limitation in the event of deterrence failure: "The possible reduction of societal destruction via damage-limitation capabilities may be the highest priority, a matter of good government and—for the United States—a fundamental responsibility of the federal government as mandated by the Constitution." [228] Offense-defense synchronization is also important in the second nuclear age because of the compressed decision-making cycle associated with the 21st century's rapid proliferation of tele-

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[226] The following description of tactical, operational, and strategic denial is based on a much larger discussion of the concept by James M. Smith and Brent J. Talbott, "Terrorism and Deterrence by Denial," Draft Paper, Institute for National Security Affairs, U.S. Air Force Academy, Fall 2008.
[227] Bunn, 3.
[228] Payne, "How Much is Enough?", 9-10.

communications technologies. The near-instant news and information cycle is likely to subject decision-makers to public pressure and a "need-to-respond" in order to maintain credibility. A deterrence strategy that integrates and synchronizes offensive and defensive systems into a comprehensive strategic posture will build the time and space and flexibility necessary for decision makers make integrated and time-sensitive decisions.

One particular example that makes offense-defense synchronization vitally important is the potential threat from Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) weapons. In a 2008 article in *Comparative Strategy*, Mark Schneider argues that "the United States could be destroyed as an industrial civilization, and our conventional forces could be defeated by a state with grossly inferior conventional capability but powerful weapons of mass destruction."[229] According to the 2004 *Congressional Commission to Assess the Treat to the United States from EMP Attack*, several potential adversaries already have or can acquire the capability to attack the United States with a high-altitude weapon-generated EMP.[230] An EMP attack does not demand a high level of sophistication. It requires the capability to vertically launch a missile with a nuclear warhead to an altitude of 40 to 400 kilometers above the Earth's surface.[231] According to the EMP Commission, "the immediate effects of EMP are disruption of, and damage to, electronic systems and electrical infrastructure." Most significantly, "an EMP attack of one or a few high-altitude nuclear detonations can produce EMP effects that can potentially disrupt or damage electronic and electrical systems over much of the United States, virtually simultaneously, at a time determined by an adversary."[232] Thus, according to the report, "EMP is one of the small number of threats that can hold our society at risk of catastrophic consequences. It has the capability to produce significant damage to critical infrastructures and thus to the very fabric of U.S. society, as well as to the ability of the United States and Western nations to project influence and military power." According to the same commission, "China and Russia have considered limited nuclear attack options that, unlike Cold War plans, employ EMP as the

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[229] Mark Schneider, "The Future of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 27, 2008, 345.
[230] Report of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack, Vol. 1, Executive Report, abstract page.
[231] Ibid., 4.
[232] Ibid., 4-5

primary or sole means of attack."[233] Indeed, the Department of Defense 2005 *Annual Report to Congress on The Military Power of the People's Republic of China* indicates that "Some PLA theorists are aware of the electromagnetic effects of using a high-altitude nuclear burst to generate high-altitude electromagnetic pulse (HEMP), and might consider using HEMP as an unconventional attack, believing the United States and other nations would not interpret it as a use of force and as crossing the nuclear threshold."[234] It is also reported that Iran is working on a vertical launch capability by mounting mobile SCUD missile transporter erector launchers on container ships and firing them on non-ballistic trajectories into the upper atmosphere. It is further rumored that Iran has tested this capability several times from ships located in the Caspian Sea. Beyond the crippling infrastructure effects from such an EMP attack lurks the following strategic question: would a U.S. president authorize a devastating response if the EMP attack did not result in the catastrophic loss of American lives (as a "conventional" nuclear ground burst inevitably would)? The very nature of an EMP attack is the one that Chinese strategists contemplate when they theorize that the United States and its allies would not interpret it as a use of force that crosses the nuclear threshold. The fact that these questions are being considered implies that traditional deterrence by punishment may not be effective in preventing such an EMP attack, and this makes offense-defense synchronization all the more vital.

The very fact that U.S. decision makers will very carefully weigh the strategic effects of a nuclear weapons employment points toward a requirement for alternative options. One of these options, and one that should be part of a basket of deterrent capabilities within a synchronized offense-defense posture, is the concept of Prompt Global Strike (PGS). Prompt Global Strike would give U.S. decision makers the option of selecting a non-nuclear response as part of the Triad's non-nuclear strike capabilities. PGS should be able to (1) strike globally against high-payoff targets; (2) be responsive in a timeframe of minutes; and (3) be executable from the Continental United States without regard to anti-access threats. Whether in the form of an intercontinental ballistic missile, a hypersonic vehicle, or a next-generation bomber, this

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[233] Ibid., 2.

[234] Annual Report to Congress on The Military Power of the People's Republic of China, Department Of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2005, 40.

capability will allow a U.S. president to "strike targets very rapidly, with high accuracy and high confidence of reaching the target, and with the necessarily military effect, but without using nuclear weapons."[235] This raises an interesting issue—that of the nuclear stigma. Deterrence credibility in the second nuclear age requires flexibility, largely because of the diversity of threats. If an adversary believes that he can successfully strike the United States below an imaginary threshold likely to elicit a U.S. nuclear response, then this represents a crease or gap in the deterrence formula. Ironically, it requires that the United States field kinetic response capabilities that are significantly below the strategic nuclear level, and ones that can be tailored or "tuned" to specific circumstances. Keith Payne writes that "the credibility of the U.S. deterrent may rest not on how much damage can be threatened a la the Cold War's assured destruction standard, but rather how controlled is that threatened damage."[236] From this perspective, Payne argues that low-yield, highly accurate nuclear weapons would increase the credibility of the U.S. deterrent posture:

> The U.S. "legacy" Cold War nuclear arsenal's generally high yields and limited precision could threaten to inflict so many innocent casualties that some opponents eager to find a rationale for action may seize on the possibility that a U.S. president would not execute an expressed nuclear deterrent threat. An opponent's doubts regarding the U.S. threat in such cases would work against the desired deterrent effect. This possibility points toward the potential value of both advanced non-nuclear and highly discriminate nuclear threat options for deterrence credibility.[237]

Thus, flexibility in force structure improves deterrence and gives vital options to decision makers.

Finally, and perhaps most important to deterrence, the reliability and credibility of forces (both conventional and nuclear) are crucial to making deterrence effective as a tool to hold other regimes and actors accountable. In light of the current malaise throughout the U.S. nuclear enterprise, significant decisions and actions must be taken to sustain a credible posture. In the mid-1990s, in the aftermath of the Cold War and a pledge to cease designing, testing, and production of new nuclear weapons, the United States decided to maintain the current

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[235] Haffa et al, 20.
[236] Payne, "How Much is Enough?", 7.
[237] Ibid.

legacy nuclear weapons stockpile indefinitely. To that effect, the Department of Energy's Stockpile Life Extension Program was created and is administered by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).[238] A recent GAO report found considerable problems with NNSA's maintenance and refurbishment of three nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal: (1) the W87 warhead, originally designed to be carried on the Peacekeeper missile, but now mounted on Minuteman III missiles, (2) the B61 (Mod 7 and Mod 11) warhead, designed to be carried on B-52 or B-2 bombers, and (3) the W76 warhead, which is mounted on the Navy's Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missile.[239] In December 2000, the GAO reported that the W87 warhead had "experienced significant design and production problems that increased its refurbishment costs by over $300 million and caused schedule delays of about 2 years."[240] Furthermore, in regards to the B61 warhead, "although NNSA completed the refurbishment of the B61 bombs on schedule in November 2008, the refurbished weapons do not meet all refurbishment objectives," and "DOD has expressed concerns about the adequacy of NNSA testing of the B61 bombs under certain conditions."[241] Finally, in reference to the W76 warhead, "NNSA did not effectively manage one of the highest risks of the program—the manufacture of a key material known as Fogbank—resulting in $69 million in cost overruns and a schedule delay of at least 1 year that represented significant logistical challenges for the Navy."[242]

Because warheads deteriorate with age and because the most recent generation of warheads was initially certified for service through the use of actual underground nuclear testing, knowledgeable experts are concerned about the long-term viability of the warhead life extension program. According to a 2008 Congressional Research Service report, the NNSA has expressed concerns that the life extension program "might be unable to maintain warheads for the long term on grounds that the accumulation of minor but inevitable variations between certain original and replacement components may reduce confidence that life-extended

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[238] *Nuclear Weapons: NNSA and DOD Need to More Effectively Manage the Stockpile Life Extension Program*, Report to the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, United States Government Accounting Office, March 2009.
[239] Ibid., 1-6.
[240] Ibid., 2.
[241] Ibid., 5 and summary page.
[242] Ibid., 6.

warheads remain safe and effective."[243] NNSA therefore recommends a new approach, the
Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW), which is a new replacement warhead specifically
designed to be certified without the benefit of underground nuclear testing. It is intended to
be simple, reliable, and provide long-term and safe certification for operational deployment
amongst the various delivery systems in the U.S. military. However, the current
administration's 2010 budget for the Department of Energy ceases further work on the RRW.
Regardless of whether or not the RRW is developed, it seems clear that the current status quo
within the U.S. nuclear weapons enterprise is far from reliable and will not yield a safe and
credible U.S. nuclear deterrent force posture.

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[243] The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program: Background and Current Developments, CRS Report for
Congress, September 12, 2008.

Deterrence: Key Points

- Deterrence is essential and complementary to a sovereignty grand strategy. The grand bargain built into sovereignty is that the United States recognizes country X's right to self-determination (regardless of how noxious its ideology may seem) but equally holds that country's leadership accountable for its actions and the actions of its citizens if those actions are hostile to the territory of the United States or the lives of American citizens. Deterrence serves as a key accountability mechanism in this formula.

- **Nuclear Malaise:**
  - In the two decades since 1989, the U.S. nuclear infrastructure has aged almost to the point of no return.
  - According to the current Chief of Staff of the United Air Force, if decisions are not made within the next 2-3 years on warhead and delivery systems replacements and modernization, then the United States will face dangerous and irreconcilable gaps in the nuclear component of the Triad within the next 10-15 years.
  - The current malaise is exacerbated by an emerging debate about the perceived utility of nuclear weapons in general, and a renewed push toward global nuclear abolition.
  - Nuclear abolition would require a tectonic change in international relations from a status quo defined by competition to a status quo that espouses cooperation, and a concomitant willingness to renounce national self-interest in deference to an international "common good." While attractive and desirable, this is hardly a realistic scenario.
  - Nuclear weapons (1) have rendered the devastating wars between the great industrial powers of the 20th century virtually obsolete, (2) act as a hedge against future great power rivals with expansive conventional forces, and (3) play a vital security-enhancing role by providing a nuclear umbrella to key allies and partners.

- **The Second Nuclear Age:**
  - The stand-out feature of the current strategic environment—what some have called the second nuclear age—is that the nuclear dynamic is no longer confined to two principal players.
  - The second nuclear age is characterized by evidence of collaboration among state and non-state actors on proliferating nuclear technologies; weak or non-existent nuclear command, control, and communications systems; limited communications channels among potential adversaries; uncertain capabilities and intentions among many nuclear actors; and escalation with nuclear first-use as a plausible scenario.
  - The challenges of the second nuclear age include: (1) new nuclear aspirants like Iran and to a lesser extent Syria, (2) nuclear adventurism by isolated regimes like North Korea, (3) Saudi (and other) initiatives in response to a perceived "Shiite" bomb in Iran, and (4) the "Talibanization" of nuclear-armed Pakistan.

- **U.S. Nuclear Renaissance:**
  - The United States must adapt deterrence strategy and declaratory policy to the current dynamics of the international environment.
  - The phrase "tailored deterrence" has gained some favor among experts because it implies that deterrence has to be made to fit the particulars and context of a given situation.
  - Tailored deterrence must grapple with the problem of deterring what some have long held to be "un-deterrable" non-state actors.
  - U.S. deterrence should be flexible and responsive vis-à-vis the full spectrum of threats, from peer and near-peer nuclear powers (Russia/China), to regional powers and rogue states armed with WMD (Pakistan/North Korea), to non-state actors and armed groups that seek to acquire a nuclear, or at least radiological, weapons capability.
  - Deterrence credibility in the second nuclear age requires flexibility, largely because of the diversity of threats. If an adversary believes that he can successfully strike the United States below an imaginary threshold likely to elicit a U.S. nuclear response, then this represents a gap in the deterrence formula. This requires that the United States field kinetic response capabilities that are significantly below the strategic nuclear level, and ones that can be tailored or "tuned" to specific circumstances.
  - Because deterrence is not foolproof, especially not against non-state actors or armed groups, the second nuclear age requires offense-defense synchronization.
  - Defenses must be considered within the overall deterrence construct because of several reasons: (1) defenses reinforce deterrence by denial, creating doubt in the mind of the enemy about whether or not that enemy's actions are likely to be successful; (2) defenses increase the costs and complexity of the enemy's planning and potential courses of action; and (3) defenses (especially when they are layered) provide a safety net if deterrence fails.
  - The reliability and credibility of forces (both conventional and nuclear) are crucial to making deterrence effective as a tool to hold other regimes and actors accountable.
  - The U.S. must take prompt action in order to guard against nuclear obsolescence (in terms of warheads, delivery systems, infrastructure, and intellectual know-how).

Diplomacy

The third and final component of a rejuvenated U.S. strategic posture is a reboot of U.S. public diplomacy. John Arquilla defines public diplomacy as "a process the goal of which is to influence mass publics by weakening the enemy's will, shoring up one's own, and persuading bystanders of the righteousness of one's cause."[244] Perhaps the most pronounced evidence that the United States has lost its strategic way is the disheveled state of its public diplomacy. While the U.S. gropes for terminology, sound bites, a sense of direction, and a practical way to "shunt the enemy's malignant energy to ground," the other side seems to be delivering a sophisticated current of strategic messaging, enabled and propelled by the modern information revolution. As Peter Mandaville has written, "On the strategic front, Bin Laden demonstrated mastery of the modern global media… He could be assured, through careful timing, his choice of topic, and even language, to gather an instant worldwide audience."[245] Robert Reilly, formerly a director of Voice of America, posits that the reason for Al Qaida's reach and appeal is its simple message: their view is that a gross injustice has been committed by the West and the United States, and that they are redressing it in order to *reestablish justice*. According to Reilly, he who wins the argument from the standpoint of justice and morality wins the so-called war of ideas.[246] While this paper does not aspire to "rewrite the book" on public diplomacy, it will focus on four major themes: (1) the content of our messaging; (2) the audience aggregation problem; (3) the fallacy of the so-called "moderates; and (4) making them govern.

Message Content. The first and most basic problem with U.S. public diplomacy is the content of the message. In this regard, the most prescient analysis comes from an outside observer. Frank Furedi, a professor of Sociology at the University of Kent in England, writes that "more than anything, the attacks on New York and Washington exposed the moral

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[244] John Arquilla, "Thinking about information strategy," in *Information Strategy and Warfare: A guide to theory and practice*, ed. John Arquilla and Douglas Borer (New York: Routledge, 2007), 5.
[245] Mandaville, 259.
[246] Robert Reilly, "The Content of Public Diplomacy," Draft Essay and interview with the author, Washington D.C., February 26, 2009.

disorientation and bewilderment of the West."[247] Furedi goes on to describe the
disillusionment:

> Probably the most significant and unexpected legacy of 9/11 is the decline of moral
> authority in the West. Since 9/11, the West has felt self-consciously defensive and
> discredited. In contrast to the experience of the Cold War, it has not been able to
> establish itself on the moral high ground. Instead, it feels internally insecure and
> increasingly lacks domestic legitimacy for its action.

In answer to Al Qaida and the ideologies of resurgent Islam, the United States embarked on a
campaign of pop culture and pop music, hiring advertising executives and crafting ads that
attempted to solve America's so-called image problem through improved marketing and better
branding. For example, the U.S. State Department actively sought out advertising executives
and MTV producers in order to design the format for Radio Sawa. Radio Sawa fills most of its
broadcast with American pop and Arab music, though it has two brief news bulletins every
hour.[248] Broadcasting Board Governor Norman Pattiz defended playing "everyone from
Eminem to J.Lo to Britney Spears" by telling the New Yorker that "it was MTV that brought
down the Berlin Wall."[249] Robert Reilly, who accurately holds this comment to be "a statement
of breathtaking ignorance" offers it as evidence of a trend in American public diplomacy—a
"dumbing down" of the message—commenting that "the act of condescension implicit in this
new format is not lost on the very part of the audience that we wish to influence the most—
those who think."[250] Previously during the Cold War, Voice of America and Radio Free Europe
offered intellectually substantive and stimulating dialogue alongside American culture and
sports programming. However, as Furedi explains, the West has lost its *sense of meaning* and
this directly affects its ability to message *meaningful* content to the other side:

> For a brief moment, many observers believed that 9/11 would represent a rallying point
> and provide the West with a sense of mission. However, in the absence of a coherent
> system of meaning, the West struggles to promote its own values; instead, it relies on
> tawdry advertising and marketing. In October 2001, advertising executive Charlotte
> Beer was appointed U.S. Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Her
> mission was to gain the assistance of Madison Avenue public relations firms to help

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[247] Frank Furedi, "Five Years After 9/11: The Search for Meaning Goes On," accessed at www.spiked-online.com/index.php?/site/printable/1603/ on May 14, 2009.
[248] Reilly, interview with the author.
[249] Robert Reilly, "Winning the War of Ideas," *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2007, 37.
[250] Ibid., 37.

rebrand and sell the U.S. to a hostile Muslim world. This focus on improving "image" indicated that the U.S. was not prepared to engage in a serious battle of ideas.[251]

Some may counter that the core content of the American message is "freedom," most readily associated with the President George W. Bush's freedom agenda, and that freedom is a principle that is worth messaging to the other side. However, the freedom agenda portrays a sense of cultural and anthropological naiveté. Why and how would this amorphous and modernist concept of freedom find resonance with Muslims, who by and large believe in Islam (which represents submission) and *tawhid* (the doctrine of the absolute unity of Allah)? As Reilly writes, while freedom and tolerance are a laudable message, "it may not be persuasive to people who consider Islam an obligation instead of an option."[252] In fact, the entire American notion of "freedom of religion" is an anachronism throughout the so-called Islamic world. Indeed, America's freedom to choose religion is seen by many Muslims as an indifference or disrespect to the "one and only true religion"—the enduring truths of Islam.

There is a way to craft a message that is more appealing to Muslims, but it does not come from demoting the centrality of their faith by suggesting that freedom or tolerance or security or opportunity are more important. As Reilly accurately points out, the kind of tolerance suggested in the freedom agenda is based on *relativism*, which requires the displacement of religion from the center of people's lives.[253] Yet Islam is the very thing that grounds and unifies Muslims. "People animated principally by religion are not going to be diverted by entertainment, sports, music, or technology, because they are primarily interested in saving their souls;" Islamic resurgence is fueled, in part, by a widely shared sense of moral outrage in response to this ill-informed American messaging.[254]

Raymond Ibrahim, commentator and author of the *Al Qaeda Reader*, explains it in the following manner: "Many Western critics fail to appreciate that, to disempower radical Islam, something theocentic and spiritually satisfying—not secularism, democracy, capitalism,

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[251] Furedi, op. cit.
[252] Reilly, "The Content of Public Diplomacy," 8.
[253] Ibid., 9-10.
[254] Ibid., 11.

materialism, feminism, etc. *must* be offered in its place."[255] Hanif Kureishi, a Pakistani author,

poignantly speaks to the emptiness of the freedom agenda in a short story entitled *My Son the*

Fanatic. In one of the scenes, Parvez, the Pakistani immigrant father who lives with his family in

England, is riding home in a taxi with his radicalized son. "What has made you like this?" Parvez

asks his son. "Living in this country," his son answers. "But I love England," Parvez answers,

"they let you do almost anything here." "That's the problem," the son answers.[256] Reilly

diagnoses the central problem of the freedom agenda when he writes that "the problem is

freedom with no moral orientation—freedom as inimical to moral order." The mantra of

freedom, untethered to any higher purpose, translates as a form of materialism and moral

relativism to most Muslims.[257] Recall that he who wins the argument from the standpoint of

justice and morality wins the so-called war of ideas. Recall also that tolerance is based on

moral relativism, a concept that is inimical to the concept of justice because it removes the

epistemological basis for "right" and "wrong" and for "good" and "evil." Moral relativism and

tolerance eventually give birth to nihilism, which amounts to the supremacy of the will, which

in turn is really the ultimate expression of unbounded freedom. Therefore, moral relativism

means that freedom is decoupled from morality. All of this is *sui generis* an anathema to Islam

and the doctrines of *tawhid* and the submission to the will of Allah. To varying degrees, most

Muslims seem to inherently understand how moral relativism undermines their faith. The

demonstration of tolerance is not a winning message to those who do not think of tolerance as

a virtue, but rather see it as a sign of moral emptiness or decline.[258] Many Muslims, when

forced to deal with the pressures of globalization and secularization, are presented by Al Qaida

and resurgent Islam with the following choice: unbounded freedom without morality, or

submission to a higher purpose. This is how Al Qaida and resurgent Islam skillfully and

consistently frame the argument and outfox the content of America's value-free message of

tolerance.

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[255] Raymond Ibrahim, "Islam's Public Enemy #1," *National Review Online*, accessed at
http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=NTUwY2QyNjA0NjcwMjExMzI2ZmJiZTEzN2U1YjYyZjE= on May 14, 2009.
[256] Hanif Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, Google Book Search, accessed at
http://books.google.com/books?id=T22HUWCUPQAC&pg=PP1&dq=my+son+the+fanatic#PPP1,M1 on May 14,
2009, 12.
[257] Reilly, "The Content of Public Diplomacy," 27.
[258] Ibid., 36.

Notwithstanding, the United States has recourse to a simple yet powerful narrative that can be used to find common ground with the "other" side. In this it can take a cue from lessons learned during a previous period of intense ideological struggle. In the 1960s and 70s during the height of the Cold War, Communism was a willful and absolutist ideology fighting against a form of relativism in the weakened and anemic West. Communism seemed ascendant and the West resorted to détente in an attempt to blunt the Soviet's momentum. For a while, Communism seemed insurmountable—it only lost after the moral recovery of the West under the leadership of Pope John Paul II, President Ronald Reagan, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who collectively spoke in unequivocal terms about the inviolability of each human being, endowed by God with inalienable rights.[259] Where did this language and philosophy come from? It originated in what Robert Reilly calls America's first foreign policy document— the Declaration of Independence.

At its very basis, the declaration is an appeal to justice, seeking to make its argument in a prudent and deliberate fashion, with a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind." It seems worth carefully pondering the language of the declaration for a moment:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

First, the declaration speaks of absolutes: (1) all men are created equal; and (2) are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; (3) governments are intended to secure these rights; and (4) governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. This is not moral relativism or value-free rhetoric. As Reilly explains, the doctrine that all men are *created equal* is an understanding of man's identity grounded in the Genesis teaching that man is created in the image of God and on the Socratic intimation of the divine man.[260] Thus the source of man's dignity is rooted in the divine. In other words, the source of man's inalienable rights is God, and therefore these rights are irrevocable. Second, the meaning of equality is important. "Being equal does not mean all men are the same in all respects; it does mean that

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[259] Ibid., 12.
[260] Ibid., 16.

there is no difference among them that is so great that some may rule others without their consent."[261] Third, the declaration's acknowledgment of the divine is crucial. Reilly quotes political scientist Paul Eidelberg's amplification of this point: "Unless there is a being superior to man [i.e. the divine], nothing in theory prevents men from degrading other men to the level of subhuman."[262] Thus, man's inalienable rights are guaranteed by a higher authority than man. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, asked the following while pondering the problem of slavery: "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift of God?"[263] John Adams wrote that "There is no such thing [as morality] without the supposition of God. There is no right and wrong in the universe without the supposition of moral government and an intellectual and moral governor."[264] Fourth, the core inalienable rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—imply a pragmatic view of human potential. The right to life is perhaps the most fundamental principle. The right to liberty is not a license for unbounded freedom, but rather the liberty to do what one ought to do (or freedom with responsibility). The right to the pursuit of happiness does not guarantee success, salvation or paradise, but rather creates opportunity for human effort. In summary, the themes in the Declaration of Independence are deeply meaningful, powerful, and simple to articulate. The declaration (1) attributes man's equality and source of rights to divine origin, (2) holds government accountable to protect those rights, and 3) subjects the power of government to the consent of the governed. These are principles and themes which appeal to justice and morality, and they should be used as a basis for content in American messaging. As Robert Reilly argues, everything done in U.S. public diplomacy should derive from, and be an elaboration of, these basic principles. The Declaration of Independence should be the corner stone of American public diplomacy. Ironically, it is the declaration's appeal to divine absolutes that could very well find resonance with Muslims, who tend reject the themes of globalization (secularism and relativism) for the absolute unity, justice, and submission of Islam. The moral

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[261] Ibid., 16.

[262] Paul Eidelbergy quoted in Reilly, ibid., 16.

[263] Thomas Jefferson quoted in David Aikman, *The Delusion of Disbelief* (Nashville: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 144.

[264] John Adams quoted in Aikman, 152.

principles inherent in the Declaration of Independence seem a much better source of content for American public diplomacy than themes about unbridled freedom or even worse, the vacuousness of Britney Spears et al.

The Aggregation Problem. The phrase "Muslim world" appears ubiquitously throughout academia, the media, and within American public diplomacy. U.S. presidents and policy makers alike sprinkle this banal formulation liberally within their discourse about current events. But what does the phrase "Muslim world" really mean? Do the very same individuals use the phrase "Christian world" or "Catholic world" or "Hindu world" to address other audiences? When U.S. presidents look to Europe, do they refer to it as the "Christian world"? This paper asserts that the phrase "Muslim world" is at best a fruitless formulation and at worst a form of free aggregation for any of the several aspirants seeking to take control of Islam's grand narrative. As Peter Mandaville writes, "to even speak of something such as the 'Muslim world' is to engage our subject matter at a very high level of abstraction, and moreover one that gives us very little sense of the social reality of Islam as a lived experience."[265] "We need to avoid prematurely projecting Islam onto a given setting, or defining it in terms of its 'Muslimness,'" Mandaville cautions. "Do we have an assumption, tacit or otherwise," he asks, "that Islam is somehow the primary determinant of outcomes in these settings?" The answer to this question is highly relevant, because if it is "no," then using the term can serve to aggregate across time and space in a less-than-helpful way. By using the phrase "Muslim world," we subconsciously create the appearance of a broad-based, global phenomenon called Islam. We help to aggregate the disparate elements within Islam and give the impression that the phenomenon (the *umma*, if you will) is more homogenized than it really is.

There are other examples of unhelpful aggregation as well. For example, the phrase "Axis of Evil" makes common cause amongst the antagonists—in this case Iran, North Korea, and Syria. Aggregating them under one phrase begins to create alliances and fosters a strategic impetus toward cooperation against the United States. Then there is the term "Global War on Terror." It could be said that this term aggregates in several different ways as well: (1) it gives the appearance of a truly global conflict and thus enhances the credibility and gravitas of those

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[265] Mandaville, 15.

who have challenged the United States at that level; (2) it gives the impression of a powerful collective identity—the "terror"—that is fighting against the United States. Actually, "terror" needlessly obfuscates the situation. Barret and Sarbin write that "terrorism is a political strategy the goal of which is to incite fear and uncertainty among the citizenry.… To speak of waging a war against a political strategy is to speak in absurdities."[266] Instead, the United States should refresh its public terminology with a discourse that relates to the principle of sovereignty (as described previously in this paper).

Instead of addressing the Islamic phenomenon in aggregate as the so-called "Islamic world"—thereby consolidating and helping to create the appearance of a unified support base—the United States should seek to disaggregate the phenomenon. Public diplomacy should be shaped as a dialogue with individual actors or states (e.g. the "Egyptians" or "Iranians"). Additionally, a skillfully conceived public diplomacy strategy should begin to take advantage of the natural schisms across Islam. It should seek to exploit fractures and rifts where this would be helpful to reinforce U.S. national security objectives and bolster U.S. allies. The various aspirants seeking to take control of Islam's so-called "grand narrative" are naturally at odds with each other. The Shiite-Sunni split runs deep across Islam. Adda Bozeman recounts that "its pernicious effects became catastrophically evident in the thirteenth century when influential Shi'ites showed themselves ready to receive the pagan Mongols as liberators from the Sunni yoke." According to Bozeman, "it was a Shi'ite vizier (of the Sunni caliph) who suggested the conquest of Baghdad to the Mongol prince Hulagu, and another Shi'ite dignitary who, following the fall of Baghdad, persuaded the alien conqueror to kill the captured caliph."[267] Vali Nasr speaks of more recent times when he describes the Shia resurgence after centuries of Sunni dominance.   "The Shia revival constitutes the most powerful resistance and challenge to Sunni extremism and jihadi activism within the Middle East region."[268] That is not to say that it would be beneficial to start to cast this as a "Shi'ite" versus "Sunni" struggle. Rather, U.S. public diplomacy should be informed by, and take advantage of, a knowledge of

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[266] Frank Barrett and Theodore Sarbin, "The rhetoric of terror," in *Information Strategy and Warfare: A guide to theory and practice*, ed. John Arquilla and Douglas Borer (New York: Routledge, 2007), 23.
[267] Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, 369.
[268] Nasr, 251.

these enduring schisms.   Equally exploitable is the divide within Al Qaida and its associated movements. Jarret Brachman points toward what he calls "massive fractures" that exist among the illuminati of the movement, and skillful manipulation could, he argues, widen these disagreements in such a way as to potentially catalyze the self-destruction of the ideology. He lists the following as opportunities for exploitation[269]:

- The rift between the two founders of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Zawahiri and Abd al-Qadir ibn Abd al-Aziz over Zawahiri's poor strategic judgment in waging war against the Egyptian government
- The feud between Abu Qatada and Abu Musab al-Suri over Qatada's continued support for Algerian terrorism in the mid 1990s, even when the GIA's activities crossed the point of acceptability for most Muslims
- The split between Jihadist thinkers and all of the "recanting" shaikhs (referred to as "turn coats" or "backbiters.")

Making tactical use of rifts within Al Qaida or even within Islam writ large involves a strategy called factionalization. Factionalization is especially relevant to tribal cultures. Interestingly enough, the U.S. government used a policy of factionalization to deal with the American Indian tribes during the 19th century. Simon reports that the U.S. government not only recognized the significance of intra- and inter-tribal factionalism, but also frequently took advantage of it. In particular, whenever nativist American Indians sought to organize any type of pan-Indian movement to challenge the U.S. government, the government deliberately supported regional or tribally-based movements in order to keep the Indian tribes divided.[270]

That said, this paper does not argue for the typical "the enemy of your neighbor is your friend" strategy, nor does it advance a U.S. policy that sows discord throughout the region in an attempt to upend and destabilize. Rather, informed by a nuanced understanding of the fractures, the U.S. can shape its public diplomacy to reinforce state sovereignty throughout the greater Middle East. This is likely to be abundantly more complicated and time consuming than simply messaging to the "Muslim world" writ large. It is also likely to be better at generating accountability in relationships vis-à-vis individual states, while simultaneously undermining those states that seek to aggregate in their quest to take charge of Islam's grand narrative.

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[269] The list is compiled from Brachman, 189-190.
[270] Simon, "Axis of Trouble: Male Youth, Factional Politics, and Religion," 17.

The Moderates Fallacy. There seems to be a widely held notion that if the United States can just elevate and encourage the so-called moderates throughout Islam, then the hard core Islamists will slowly begin to lose ground. However, there is a fundamental flaw in this logic, and it involves religion and ideology. While you can disprove an ideology, you cannot prove a religion wrong. As Simon points out, "ideology has never equaled religion as a motivating factor for believers…religion is primordial."[271] Encouraging the moderates is like weighing in on their arguments with the hard core Islamists (nativists) about religion. It is an argument that the United States cannot possibly win. To use the common parlance, not even stickier messages will push people over the proverbial tipping point. In fact, bolstering the moderates has the potential to do serious damage. Simon contends that our weighing in on behalf of moderates, or even just publicly expressing the desire that moderates be successful, becomes the means by which moderates will have nativists to deal with in perpetuity. Still worse, according to Simon, "by targeting 'radical' Islam, we simply push nativists to make more of religion than they already have thus far."[272] In other words, our support of the moderates creates more nativists. Here is where the logic of a trained anthropologist seems worth heeding:

> We cannot supersede religion. We cannot contain it either. We also cannot directly confront it. As soon as we voice our preferences, or praise moderation and moderates, or preach toleration, we create problems for those who want to work with us. We would do far better instead to encourage fractures over anything but religion. Far better for us if local identity—not religion—provided that glue.[273]

Instead, Simon posits three reasons why we should promote country-based identities as a counter to Islam's transnational appeal: (1) the world is already carved up into countries and we know how effective and long-lived a rallyer something like nationalism can be; (2) nationalism, like religion, builds on institutions found at the grassroots level: family, local community, peer groups, etc; and (3) nothing else that we can come up with is going to have the power to leach away at religion's organizational strengths.[274] In summary, this is why the

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[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid., 36.
[273] Ibid., 41-42.
[274] Ibid.

United States would benefit from a grand strategy that focuses on sovereignty (just as it's Cold War strategy focused on containment), and why its public diplomacy must disaggregate Islam and engage with individual nation states.

Making Them Govern. To perpetrate violence is not the same as state building or governance. Al Qaida is about the fight. It does not have an in-depth model for government neither is it ready to govern. Most of its thinking goes into how violence supports revolution. Bin Laden is the Che Guevara of Islamic revolution—he focuses on the efficacy of violence and justifying the revolutionary struggle. But what if they were afforded the opportunity or were made to govern? Giles Kepel tellingly writes that "despite the devastation it can cause—even such shocking devastation as the entire world witnessed on September 11—desperate terrorist acts do not translate easily into political victory and legitimate power."[275] Administering a state is different from propagating violence and generating a transnational and faceless revolution. As Jarret Brachman writes, "Jihadism's fundamental weakness is that it offers no attractive end result to most people. This is why the movement has been so vocal about its motivations for fighting and its short-term objectives: its leaders are well aware that their territorial methodology and their long-term strategic objectives are widely unpopular."[276] Glenn Robinson, a noted Islamic scholar, seems to agree. According to Robinson, Al Qaida's regressive philosophy for Muslim society in an Islamic state simply does not appeal to most Muslims. As a result, Al Qaida has to limit its information operations to focus almost exclusively on the injustices of U.S. foreign policy and the complicity of local apostate regimes in America's war of domination. These two broad themes make up over 90 percent of Bin Laden's public messages. It is very difficult for Al Qaida to move beyond these themes."[277]

Beyond Al Qaida, what is the story of governance across the greater Middle East and throughout the milieu of Islamic countries? Oliver Roy, among others, argues that Khomeini's 1979 revolution failed to yield a role model for Islamist governance.

> Not only was the price to be paid for establishing an Islamic regime too high in terms of blood and repression—see for example the decision made by Khomeini in July 1988 to rid Iran of political prisoners by either freeing them or killing them; thousands were

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[275] Kepel, 19.
[276] Brachman, 192.
[277] InfoStrat 110.

killed in mass executions in Iranian gaols—but the despairing gap between ideals and reality remains.… Empowered Islamism provides neither a new kind of social or economic justice. Hypocrisy is dominant: under the veil of moral conservatism, corruption is pervasive. Islamism in power has been unable to deal with westernization. It has adopted technology, technocracy and political institution models, but has been unable to give root to another culture or value system.[278]

Indeed, as Vali Nasr indicates, "the Islamic revolution is today a spent force in Iran, and the Islamic republic is a tired dictatorship facing pressures to change..."[279] And Giles Kepel adds that

…by the twentieth anniversary of the revolution in 1999, a generation came of age that had never known the shah. However, it did know massive unemployment, moral repression, and a cataleptic social order that was completely dominated by the religious hierarchy, the 'pious foundations' that control the economy in collusion with the bazaar merchants, and a whole crew of profiteers who preyed on the Islamic Republic.[280]

What about other examples of attempted Islamist governance? Kepel, who is certainly not known for his favorable views of America's interventions in the Middle East, notes that most Islamist experiments lead to dead ends: "uncontrollable violence in Algeria and Egypt, ineffectual violence in Palestine, religious civil war in Pakistan, co-option by a dictator and exhaustion of moral credit in Mahathir's Malaysia and Suharto's Indonesia, inability to live under the constraints of government coalitions in Turkey and Jordan."[281] Muhammad Hussein Fadhlullah, the grand ayatollah who is Hezbollah's spiritual leader, recently commented to the Wall Street Journal that "our problem in the Arab world is that people fear their rulers and therefore fall short of changing them, whereas the natural course of things is that rulers should fear their peoples.… We, in the Arab countries or in the East, we don't have institutions. The ruler is one person or one family. Therefore the people cannot object."[282] In December 1999, Abdel Wahab al-Effendi, a native of Sudan and well respected writer in the London-based Arab daily newspaper *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, wrote an article deploring the fact that when Islamists achieve power, they ignore all democratic procedures: "if the Islamists do not succeed in

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[278] Roy, 89.
[279] Nasr, 213.
[280] Kepel, 365.
[281] Ibid., 368.
[282] Robert Pollock, "A Dialogue With Lebanon's Ayatollah," *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2009.

resolving this problem, they will deal a mortal blow to our hopes of Islamic renewal, and bring down a calamity on Islam. And that calamity will be far worse than any visited upon it by communism or secularism—for Islamists can strike Islam in its most vital places, where enemies have never managed to inflict a wound."[283]

In surveying the landscape, the outlier states are Iran—where revolutionary Islam succeeded in taking power, and Saudi Arabia—where the state was created by marrying the state with Wahhabi Islam. In many of the secular (Turkey, Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia) and moderately Islamic (Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan) states, the government has adopted the appearance of being Islamic while simultaneously using strong-arm police and intelligence tactics to guarantee regime survival. These governments encourage their populations to "be good Muslims" but also to be "apolitical"—i.e. the Islamic state is not a religious objective, and the Islamists have been subtly co-opted and/or repressed. In Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Sudan, the government is now akin to the "chief fundamentalist," thereby edging out the Islamists by attempting being "more Islamic then they are." Of course, the danger with this it could generate an even more extremist response, as seems to be the case with the "Talibanization" of Pakistan. The dominant regional theme seems to be regime preservation, and this almost at any cost and without consideration of whether or not the regime governs with the consent of the governed. Where regimes have been challenged by Islamists, the United States has traditionally found ways to intervene and undermine their accession to power. This happened with Algeria, where the United States partnered with France to support the military regimes annulment of the election results that favored the Islamists. It also happened in Palestine, where Hamas defeated Fatah in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections and the United States and others intervened with sanctions and also reportedly worked with Hamas to undermine Fatah's position. As Noah Feldman comments, there is "no case where an Islamist government has come to power by peaceful means and been allowed to govern peacefully," neither is there an example of "an Islamist government taking power under peaceful conditions and failing to govern."[284] Thus many Muslims are trapped between

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[283] Effendi quoted in Kepel, 362.

[284] Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 145.

oppressive rulers that they fear (and that are often supported by the United States), and Islamists that are battling for power. A grand strategy based on sovereignty would dictate that the United States recognize—and hold accountable—Islamists governments that come to power, regardless of how noxious this may seem. Until Muslim populations can gauge for themselves whether or not they can abide by an Islamist regime, the Islamists will continue to hold an allure. In short, the test of governance could very well be the best way to force resurgent Islam to either prove itself capable of moderation, or else prove conclusively that it is incapable of anything save the propagation of violence and revolution.

Diplomacy: Key Points

- Perhaps the most pronounced evidence that the United States has lost its strategic way is the disheveled state of its public diplomacy.
- While the U.S. gropes for terminology, sound bites, a sense of direction, and a practical way to "shunt the enemy's malignant energy to ground," the other side seems to be delivering a sophisticated current of strategic messaging, enabled and propelled by the modern information revolution.

- **Message Content:**
  - In answer to Al Qaida and the ideologies of resurgent Islam, the United States embarked on a campaign of pop culture and pop music, hiring advertising executives and crafting ads that attempted to solve America's so-called image problem through improved marketing and better branding.
  - Britney Spears is not a suitable alternative for substantive engagement. Indeed, some argue that it is condescending at best, and threatening at worst, for value-driven cultures (such as those of Islamic countries) to be bombarded with value-free programming and crass commercial branding.
  - Some counter that the core content of the American message is "freedom," and that freedom is a principle that is worth messaging to the other side. However, the freedom agenda portrays a sense of cultural and anthropological naiveté. Why and how would this amorphous and modernist concept of freedom find resonance with Muslims, who by and large believe in Islam (which represents submission) and *tawhid* (the doctrine of the absolute unity of Allah)?
  - The entire American notion of "freedom of religion" is an anachronism throughout the so-called Islamic world. Indeed, America's freedom to choose religion is seen by many Muslims as an indifference or disrespect to the "one and only true religion"—the enduring truths of Islam.
  - Tolerance is not a winning message to those who do not think of tolerance as a virtue, but rather see it as a sign of moral emptiness or decline.
  - Many Muslims, when forced to deal with the pressures of globalization and secularization, are presented by Islamists with the following choice: unbounded freedom without morality, or submission to a higher purpose. This is how Al Qaida and resurgent Islam skillfully and consistently frame the argument and outfox the content of America's value-free message of tolerance.
  - There is a promising way to craft a message that is more appealing to Muslims, but it does not come from demoting the centrality of their faith by suggesting that freedom or tolerance or security or opportunity are more important.
  - The Declaration of Independence is a much more appropriate vehicle for public diplomacy and engagement because at its very basis, the declaration is an appeal to justice, and justice is a principle that resonates with Muslims.
  - The declaration speaks of absolutes: (1) all men are created equal; and (2) are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights; (3) governments are intended to secure these rights; and (4) governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

This is not moral relativism or value-free rhetoric, and it is a language that value-laded Muslim societies can understand and at least respect, even if they do not agree with it.

- The themes in the Declaration of Independence are deeply meaningful, powerful, and simple to articulate. The declaration (1) attributes man's equality and source of rights to divine origin, (2) holds government accountable to protect those rights, and 3) subjects the power of government to the consent of the governed. These are principles and themes which appeal to justice and morality, and they should be used as a basis for content in American messaging.

- **The Aggregation Problem:**
  - The phrase "Muslim world" appears ubiquitously throughout academia, the media, and within American public diplomacy. U.S. presidents and policy makers alike sprinkle this banal formulation liberally within their discourse about current events.
  - The phrase "Muslim world" is at best a fruitless formulation and at worst a form of free aggregation for any of the several aspirants seeking to take control of Islam's grand narrative.
  - By using the phrase "Muslim world," we subconsciously create the appearance of a broad-based, global phenomenon called Islam. We help to aggregate the disparate elements within Islam and give the impression that the phenomenon (the *umma*, if you will) is more homogenized than it really is.
  - Instead, the United States should seek to *dis*aggregate the phenomenon. Public diplomacy should be shaped as a dialogue with individual actors or states (e.g. the "Egyptians" or "Iranians" or the "Indonesians" and not the "Muslim world").
  - A skillfully conceived public diplomacy strategy should begin to take advantage of the natural schisms across Islam. It should seek to exploit fractures and rifts where this would be helpful to reinforce U.S. national security objectives and bolster U.S. allies.

- **The Moderates Fallacy:**
  - There seems to be a widely held notion that if the United States can just elevate and encourage the so-called moderates throughout Islam, then the hard core Islamists will slowly begin to lose ground.
  - There is a fundamental flaw in this logic, and it involves religion and ideology. While one can disprove an ideology, one cannot prove a religion wrong.
  - Therefore, encouraging the moderates is like weighing in on an unwinnable argument with the hard core Islamists (nativists) about religion.
  - To use the common parlance, not even stickier messages will push people over the proverbial tipping point. In fact, bolstering the moderates has the potential to do serious damage by helping to create more nativists.

- **Making Them Govern:**
  - To perpetrate violence is not the same as state building or governance. Al Qaida is about the fight. It does not have an in-depth model for government neither is it ready to govern.

- With respect to the established governments (e.g. Egypt, Saudi Arabia), the dominant regional theme seems to be regime preservation, and this almost at any cost and without consideration of whether or not the regime governs with the consent of the governed.
- Therefore, many Muslims are trapped between oppressive rulers that they fear (and that are often supported by the United States), and Islamists that are battling for power.
- A grand strategy based on sovereignty would dictate that the United States recognize—and hold accountable—Islamists governments that come to power, regardless of how noxious this may seem.
- Until Muslim populations can gauge for themselves whether or not they can abide by an Islamist regime, the Islamists will continue to hold an allure.
- The test of governance could very well be the best way to force resurgent Islam to either prove itself capable of moderation, or else prove conclusively that it is incapable of anything save the propagation of violence and revolution.

Summary and Concluding Thoughts

The opening salvoes of the 21st century are eviscerating the sense of global optimism that characterized the 1990s and the end of the Cold War. In a general sense, the future security environment will probably be characterized by more competition and less cooperation. Resurgent Islam will play a leading role with Iran and Saudi Arabia maneuvering as the Shiite and Sunni anchor states, contending for the title of Islamic power broker. The global Islamic milieu will serve as a conflicted backdrop as this struggle evolves. For the foreseeable future, Al Qaida and its associated movements will persist as a threat, both to Western nations like the United States (the "far" enemy) and to incumbent Muslim governments like Egypt and Pakistan (the "near" enemy). An equally significant challenge will come from the re-emergence of what Azar Gat has called "nondemocratic great powers." At the moment, the leading illiberal powers are Russia and China, as peer and near-peer competitors to the United States. According to Gat, "China and Russia represent a return of economically successful authoritarian capitalist powers, which have been absent since the defeat of Germany and Japan in 1945, but are much larger than the latter two countries ever were."[285] The 21st century also ushers in what some now call the "second nuclear age," in which competition is expanded from two principal players to multiple actors, adding complexity and volatility to the nuclear calculus. Moreover, the boundaries of the Westphalian system are also under pressure, as modern technology and information flows transcend borders, and virtual communities and e-tribes assert their influence in ways heretofore unseen.

The competitive and conflicted nature of this security environment will challenge the foundations and assumptions of Western civilization. The relative ideological simplicity of the Cold War has been eclipsed by a confusing array of ideas and paradigms. The 21st century is awash in a messy and ill-defined ideological struggle between globalization and religion. Globalization is a decidedly modern phenomenon driven by the twin philosophies of secularism and moral relativism. Resurgent religion is a primordial response to globalization's perceived assault on identity and traditional values. In the midst of this struggle, the West seems

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[285] Azar Gat, "The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4, July/August 2007, 59, 66.

increasingly afflicted by an incipient culture of self-doubt and repudiation. As Roger Scruton writes:

> This culture of repudiation has transmitted itself, through media and the schools, across the spiritual terrain of Western civilization, leaving behind it a sense of emptiness and defeat, a sense that nothing is left to believe in or endorse, save only the freedom to believe. And a belief in freedom to believe is neither a belief nor freedom. It encourages hesitation in the place of conviction and timidity in the place of choice…. If repudiation of its past and its identity is all that Western civilization can offer, it cannot survive: it will give way to whatever future civilization can offer hope and consolidation to the young and fulfill their deep-rooted human need for social membership.[286]

What then, is to be done? The most pressing task is to craft a grand strategy that resonates with the American public. A broad domestic consensus is vital *if* the United States is to regain its strategic footing. This consensus can be built around the principles of the American founding, in particular the ideas resident in the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. The declaration is America's most basic common denominator: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed*.   The declaration is a principled, consensus-building foundation that naturally serves as the basis for American grand strategy.

In that regard, this paper argues for a refreshed grand strategy based a three-pronged approach that bolsters *sovereignty*, enhances *deterrence*, and reconstitutes *diplomacy*. "George Kennan famously argued for the Cold War policy of containment that the United States only had to be true to itself to prevail in the long term over its adversary."[287] In a similar fashion, a grand strategy based on sovereignty aligns with America's founding principles and can serve as the new guiding theme for American interactions with the world. During the Cold War, America promised to use its diplomatic, informational, military, and economic tools of

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[286] Roger Scruton, "Forgiveness and Irony: What makes the West strong," City Journal, Vol. 19, No. 1, Winter 2009, xx.

[287] Richard Russell, "The Global Islamic Insurgency: Saudi Arabia in its Crosshairs," CSRC Discussion Paper 05/46, September 2005, 17.

power to contain the spread of communism and prevent a domino effect, while simultaneously crafting a positive image of America abroad. A 21st century sovereignty strategy involves a new "grand bargain": sovereignty means that the United States recognizes in others the freedom for political and ideological self-determination, but also expects those governments to be accountable under the norms and laws of the international system. Sovereignty bolsters the Westphalian system by inherently recognizing the authority of indigenous governments, while requiring that these governments and their citizens to "play by the rules" in their interaction with the United States and its citizens. Above all, a sovereignty strategy would unburden the United States from evangelizing the world for democracy, and would instead restore the image of a "Beacon on the Hill" or of the Statue of Liberty, beckoning from New York harbor to all of those who voluntarily come to her shores. A sovereignty strategy would resurrect the concept of American exceptionalism—which is informed by the understanding that what works for America may not work for the rest of the world.

What are the practical implications of a sovereignty grand strategy? It means that the United States should terminate its military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan in a deliberate, timely and efficient manner, recognizing and accepting that the successor governments in those countries are not likely to be liberal democratic regimes. As Oleg Kulakov writes regarding lessons learned from the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, "battlefield victory can be almost irrelevant." On the other hand, "foreign military presence may hinder the pursuit of political solutions. A political prescription that is perceived as foreign—and promoted by foreigners—is likely to be rejected by the people of Afghanistan because they have historically been sensitive about maintaining autonomy."[288] A perduring U.S. presence will only continue to fuel a nativist and tribal Islamist response while sapping American military and economic strength, weakening the credibility of its intentions, and adding credence to those who accuse the U.S. of being an imperial hegemon. A withdrawal from the region may very well lead to an Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban and an Iraq ruled by an illiberal, authoritarian regime. However, a sovereignty strategy would subsequently hold those regimes accountable for their actions as well as the actions of their citizens. Under sovereignty's grand bargain, the U.S. would make it

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[288] Oleg Kulakov, Lessons learned from the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan: Implications for Russian Defense Reform, Research Paper No. 26, NATO Defense College, Rome, March 2006, 6-7.

abundantly clear that the right of ideological self-determination comes with a burden to "play by the rules," and that any hostile action (against U.S. territory or U.S. citizens) linked in any way to the regime (whether by citizenry, territory, or sponsorship) will be met with swift military retribution.

Furthermore, a sovereignty grand strategy means that the United States would draw down its long-term foreign aid programs, thus ending the practice of sometimes insulating illiberal governments from having to be accountable to their populations. The West's predilection to propping up incumbent governments for the convenience of regional stability contributes to what Robert Springborg has called a "lethal brew of authoritarian government and economic deprivation" that provides abundant energy to drive the Islamist challenge.[289] Perhaps the most egregious example of this is Egypt. President Hosni Mubarak, who has been in power since the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981, has benefited from timeless U.S. support. According to the Christian Science Monitor, the U.S. provides Egypt an annual average of $1.3 billion in military and $815 million in economic assistance. All told, Egypt has received over $50B in U.S. foreign aid since 1975.[290] None of this is lost on the Muslim Brotherhood, which continues to propagate its ideology domestically and internationally.

This is not to say that there is no role for U.S. foreign aid or assistance. However, a sovereignty strategy must finely tune this policy tool, ensuring that it is not used to expense domestic accountability for the temporary guise of regional stability. Under a sovereignty strategy, foreign aid programs should be conditional and time limited. Examples of viable foreign aid and assistance programs of a more limited nature include those that respond to natural disasters of unusual scale (tsunami, hurricane, or earth quake relief) or similar, narrowly-focused and time-limited cases. In all cases, however, foreign assistance must be requested by the indigenous government. The U.S. cannot afford the perception that it is exerting influence on the domestic political situation of a foreign country.

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[289] Robert Springborg, The Middle East's Democracy Gap: Causes and Consequences," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. XIII, Issue 2, Spring/Summer 2007, 243.
[290] Charles Levinson, "$50 billion later, taking stock of US aid to Egypt," The Christian Science Monitor, Online Edition, 12 April, 2004, accessed at http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0412/p07s01-wome.html on 19 May, 2009.

A sovereignty strategy would require an enhanced deterrence strategy, with a declaratory policy that signals a firm commitment to militarily punish aggression against United States territory and citizens. According to the recently released Perry Schlesinger Commission report, the U.S. may be close to a tipping point internationally due to the danger of nuclear proliferation, and domestically due to an accumulation of delayed decisions about the U.S. nuclear weapon program.[291] The report casts doubt on recent domestic and international interest in nuclear abolition by asserting that "the conditions that might make possible the global elimination of nuclear weapons are not present today and their creation would require a fundamental transformation of the world political order."[292] Instead, the report unambiguously affirms the need for nuclear deterrence by stating: "For the indefinite future, the United States must maintain a viable nuclear deterrent. The other NPT-recognized nuclear-weapon states [i.e. Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom] have put in place comprehensive programs to modernize their forces to meet new international circumstances."[293] In other words, what is the United States doing to bolster its deterrent posture? In that regard, the report offers the following significant findings:[294]

- The Stockpile Stewardship Program and the Life Extension Program have been remarkably successful in refurbishing and modernizing the stockpile…but cannot be counted on for the indefinite future.
- The physical infrastructure [of the nuclear weapons complex] is in serious need of transformation
- The intellectual infrastructure is also in trouble.
- Maintaining the reliability of the warheads as they age is an increasing challenge. The Life Extension Program…is becoming increasingly difficult to continue within the constraints of a rigid adherence to original materials and design as the stockpile continues to age.

To summarize, all elements of the U.S. nuclear enterprise, to include the physical infrastructure, the intellectual infrastructure, and the actual weapon systems (both warheads and delivery systems) are urgently in need of programmatic decisions regarding their long-term viability.

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[291] America's Strategic Posture, The Final Report of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, William J. Perry, Chairman and James R. Schlesinger, Vice-Chairman, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington D.C., 2009, xv.
[292] Ibid., xvi.
[293] Ibid., 98.
[294] Ibid., xvii, 98, 101-102.

According to one high-ranking defense official, if these decisions are not made within the next 2-3 years, there will be unavoidable repercussions within the next 10-15 year timeframe.

Finally, a sovereignty grand strategy also requires a refreshed approach to public diplomacy, in particular the need to stop homogenizing the so-called "Islamic world." The phrase "Islamic world" serves little more than to aggregate the phenomenon for those Islamists who wish to create the impression that there is a global *ummah*—or Islamic community. Instead of perpetually referring to the "Islamic world," public diplomacy should be shaped as a dialogue with individual states (e.g. the "Egyptians" or "Iranians"), and should also seek to exploit fractures and rifts where this would be helpful to reinforce U.S. national security objectives and bolster U.S. allies. Public diplomacy should also abandon the deeply flawed strategy of focusing on so-called moderates. In attempting to shore up moderates, the U.S. not only meddles with domestic debates, but fuels nativist responses. Instead, the U.S. should consider how governance could ultimately undermine the very existence of the Islamist phenomenon. To use Napoleon's popular dictum, "if your enemy is busy shooting himself in the foot, don't get in the way." In other words, the Islamists rarely display a proclivity toward governance, at least not a durable form of governance. The test of governance may be the best way to undermine the long-term viability of resurgent Islam.

Finally, to reflect on how out-of-touch American public diplomacy has become, consider the following suggestion from a respected, US-based Imam on how the U.S. should have messaged its strategic rationale for the 2003 Iraq war: "The US should explain that they are followers of Jesus Christ and that they are the sons of Abraham, like all Muslims. They came to the Holy Land, from where Abraham came, to rid the world of Lucifer—Saddam Hussein."[295] One can imagine American policy elites recoiling at the thought of even contemplating such a message. And yet, this reaction would betray the fundamental ignorance of many policy makers with respect to traditional Islam. As Dudley Woodberry, a professor emeritus at Fuller Theological Seminary explains, "for traditional Islam, culture is part of religion—for most

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[295] S. A. Tatham, Strategic Communication: A Primer, Advanced Research and Assessment Group, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, December 2008, 11.

Westerners, religion is part of culture."[296] Those same policy makers should be reminded of John Stuart Mill's thoughts on the subject: "One man with beliefs is equal to ninety-nine with only interests!"

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[296] Dudley Woodberry, interview with the author, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, February 9, 2009.